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ELEMENTS

OF

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

PART I. MORPHOLOGICAL

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OF

THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

PART I. MORPHOLOGICAL

BEING

THE GIFFORD LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH IN 1896

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
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PREFACE.

THE ten lectures contained in this volume were delivered by me, in my capacity of Gifford Lecturer, in the University of Edinburgh, in November and December 1896. They form the first half of a course on the Science of Religion, and treat of the *Morphological* part of that science. The second series will deal with the *Ontological* division of the science.

I had hoped to publish these lectures immediately after their delivery, and before their appearance in Dutch, the language in which they were first written. This unfortunately proved impossible. They have been rendered into English twice. The first translation was made use of in their delivery. The second is the one now issued. It has been made in entire independence of the first, and has been carefully revised by myself and others.

The object of the late Lord Gifford in founding Lectureships in the four Scottish Universities was to provide for the teaching of "Natural Theology." Although this term has now gone somewhat out of fashion, the manner in which Lord Gifford proceeds to explain his object makes it clear that by "Natural Theology" he meant what we nowadays call the Science of Religion. He expressly declares that the Lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath, or to make any declaration of belief; that they may be of any denomination, or of any religion, or of none; provided they be able, reverent men, true thinkers, and earnest inquirers after truth. He further desires the Lecturers to treat their subject "as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science—that of Infinite Being —without reference to, or reliance upon, any supposed exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation." He afterwards fixes the term of office at two years, with re-eligibility for a second, and at most for a third term. Re-election, however, has been exceptional, and the only instance of it has been that of Professor Max Müller, who held the Glasgow Lectureship for two terms of two years each with high acceptance.

When I was invited to fill this important office some seven years ago, I was obliged regretfully to decline, as I had then just been appointed Rector of my own University of Leyden. But when the Senate of Edinburgh University was good enough unanimously to appoint me to the Lectureship in 1895, I felt constrained to accept the honour. While I was attracted by the prospect of discussing my favourite study in presence of the British public, I was thoroughly aware of the difficulties of my task. It was easy enough to choose my subject, and there was much that I wished to say about it; but I should have to say it in a language I had previously used two or three times only in public, and I was expected to divide my matter into a fixed number of lectures of equal length, and to deliver them before a strange audience, composed of many different elements. I have therefore been unable to perform my task to my own entire satisfaction; but the exceedingly cordial reception extended to me and to my work in Edinburgh, and the close and indulgent attention paid to my lectures by large audiences throughout the whole course, not only afforded me great encouragement in my task, but enable me to look forward with somewhat more confidence to its completion in the second half of my proposed course.

SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

LECTURE I.

CONCEPTION, AIM, AND METHOD OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.

It is now more than twenty-five years since my distinguished friend, Professor F. Max Müller, of Oxford, gave four lectures in the Royal Institution of London, which he published a few years later under the title, 'Introduction to the Science of Religion.'

My task is a similar one, and yet different. The word "Introduction" has a very flexible meaning. *Intro* does not mean merely "up to," but "across and within" the threshold. We must, however, at first be content merely to conduct the inquirer into the building, and there to leave him to the guidance of others or to his own resources. This was all that Professor Max Müller could do at that time. He had

no alternative. As the foundation of this new science had only just been laid, he could but submit the plan of the building to his readers and hearers. How powerfully he afterwards himself contributed to the building up of our science I need hardly remind you; and of this his Gifford Lectures recently delivered in the University of Glasgow afford the last and most conclusive proof. We must cordially appreciate his work, even where we sometimes differ from him in method and point of view. Twenty-five years ago, however, his 'Introduction of the Science of Religion' to his hearers and readers necessarily dealt with the preliminaries rather than with the results of the science, and was an apology for it more than an initiation into it. We are now farther advanced. The last twenty-five years have been specially fruitful for the scientific study of religion. That study has now secured a permanent place among the various sciences of the human mind. We do not now require to apologise for it by using the timid — or shall I say sceptical? — epithet "so-called," as the distinguished American scholar, the late W. Dwight Whitney, has done in an otherwise admirable article. Even Governments, which are not generally inclined to countenance innovation, and the less so if it threatens to burden their budgets, have recognised our science as a necessary branch of education. My own little Holland, generally accustomed to wait

with patient deliberation until her bigger sisters have set the example, has in this case taken the lead and founded special chairs for the history and philosophy of religion. Republican France has behaved in princely fashion, and has founded not only a chair in the Collége de France, but also a well-organised "École d'Études religieuses." Others have followed these examples. The German universities did not at first regard the young aspirant with favour, but German scholars of repute soon discovered that what seemed an ugly duckling was really a swan, and offered it their powerful support. That the new studies at once aroused keen interest in Great Britain, and a little later in the United States of America, I need not remind you; and of this fact Lord Gifford's bequest affords splendid evidence. For by "natural theology, studied in a scientific method," he doubtless meant precisely what we are now accustomed to call the science of religion. This science, therefore, requires no further apology in appearing before you in full consciousness of its rights; nor need I apologise for attempting to make you better acquainted with its rudiments, its method, the results it has attained, its aim, and its fruits. I have a deep sense of the difficulties of my vast undertaking, which are increased by the fact that I address you in a language other than my own; but I have devoted the whole of my powers and the greater part of my life

to these favourite studies of mine, and I am encouraged by the confidence which the honoured Senate of this university has reposed in me. I shall do my best to merit that confidence, and shall reckon on your indulgence. I would only further remark that I shall confine myself exclusively to scientific ground. And while I shall not conceal my own sincere convictions, I have too much respect for true piety in whatever form to wound any man's conscientious beliefs.

First of all, it is necessary to state what we understand by science of religion, and what right we have to call it a science. We shall not begin, as is so often done, by formulating a preconceived ideal of religion; if we attempted to do so, we should move in a circle. What religion really is in its essence can only be ascertained as the result of our whole investigation. By religion we mean for the present nothing different from what is generally understood by that term—that is to say, the aggregate of all those phenomena which are invariably termed religious, in contradistinction to ethical, æsthetical, political, and others. I mean those manifestations of the human mind in words, deeds, customs, and institutions which testify to man's belief in the superhuman, and serve to bring him into relation with it. Our investigation will itself reveal the foundation of those phenomena which are generally called religious. If it is maintained that the superhuman falls beyond the range of the perceptible, and

that its existence cannot be proved by scientific or philosophical reasoning, we have our answer ready. The question whether philosophy or metaphysics has any right to judge as to the reality of the objects of faith does not concern us here. We therefore leave the question open. The object of our science is not the superhuman itself, but religion based on belief in the superhuman; and the task of investigating religion as a historical-psychological, social, and wholly human phenomenon undoubtedly belongs to the domain of science.

But whilst admitting this, some writers have felt an insuperable dislike to the term "science of religion," and have attempted to substitute some more modest term. For my part I see nothing presumptuous in the word science. It does not mean that we know everything about a subject, but simply that we investigate it in order to learn something about it, in accordance with a sound and critical method, appropriate to each department. It cannot therefore be doubted that such an investigation of religion can claim the name of science, and that the science of religion has a right to rank as an independent study, and not merely as one of a group. What, then, are the characteristics that constitute a science? I cannot answer this question better than in the words of Whitney when he is vindicating the rights of the science of language. The characteristics are—a wide extent of domain; a unity which

embraces the multiplicity of facts belonging to that domain; an inward connection of these facts which enables us to subject them to careful classification, and to draw fruitful inferences from them; and lastly, the importance of the results attained, and of the truth which reasoning has brought to light from the ascertained facts. Now, if the science of language can stand this test, and need not fear comparison with any other recognised science, the same holds true of the science of religion. This surely requires no lengthy demonstration. It is obvious to every one. The province of our investigation is sufficiently extensive—all religions of the civilised and uncivilised world, dead and living, and all the religious phenomena which present themselves to our observation. The unity which combines the multiplicity of these phenomena is the human mind, which reveals itself nowhere so completely as in these, and whose manifestations, however different the forms they assume on different planes of development, always spring from the same source. This unity renders a scientific classification of religions quite as justifiable as that of language. And it is self-evident that the results of such a science must be of the utmost importance in the study of man and his history, of his individual, social, and, above all, his religious life.

Need we be surprised that such a science is not immediately welcomed by all; that her very right of existence is denied by many; and that she has long had

to encounter fierce opposition? She is no worse off than her predecessors. What new science—not to speak of philosophy—has ever had a better reception? I need only mention anatomy, physics, chemistry, astronomy—all denounced at first as harmful, dangerous, and impious; and have they not all had their martyrs, just like new religions and heresies? The monks in the days of Erasmus thought the study of Hebrew most pernicious for Christian divines and preachers, and the austere Calvinists of the seventeenth century were quite as bitterly opposed to the study of Greek. How did the Orientalists of the old school greet the appearance of Assyriology, which certainly at first deserved a little censure on account of her youthful pranks and follies? How did classic philologists receive the budding science of language? I think I hear our old friend Cobet, the gifted Hellenist, making merry at the expense of the *comparativi*, as he called them. And, moreover, religion is a very delicate matter. To make it the subject of a science seems like desecration. I admit that many champions of the science of religion, and many who hailed it with acclamation, had themselves to blame for the indignation they aroused—enemies of religion, who endeavoured, in the name of what they were pleased to call science and philosophy, to do away with it altogether, and whose *Ecrasez l'infâme* alarmed persons of weak faith and angered those of strong. But blind hatred

and prejudice exclude both science, which investigates with calm impartiality, and philosophy, which strives to comprehend and explain earnestly and lovingly all that is human. We have also to contend against misapprehension. I have pointed out that the popular dread of our science proceeds largely from a mistaken idea of science in general and of this science in particular. When the latter keeps within the limits assigned to all sciences, religion will incur no danger but rather derive great benefit. Our science does not presume, and it is well aware that it is powerless, to create a religion, just as the science of language has neither desire nor power to produce new languages, to proclaim new laws of language, or to uproot existing languages. Neither languages nor religions are created by science; their life and aims, their growth and decay, go on independently of science, and obey laws which she can discover but cannot impose. All she desires, and all she is entitled to do, is to subject religion, as a human and therefore historical and psychological phenomenon, to unprejudiced investigation, in order to ascertain how it arises and grows and what are its essentials, and in order thoroughly to understand it.

It may perhaps be thought that the votary of our science cannot be restrained in his criticisms and judgments, and that the science is therefore fraught with danger. But here again we must carefully distinguish. He judges, in so far as his task is to compare the

different manifestations of religious belief and life, and the different religious communities, in order to classify them in accordance with the stage and direction of their development. He criticises, in so far as he points out where there has been retrogression from a higher to a lower plane, in so far as he scrutinises so-called religious facts which really belong to a different domain (such as that of art, philosophy, or politics), and pathological phenomena (such as intellectualism, sentimentalism, or moralism), and distinguishes all these from sound and living religion. He takes up, if we may use the favourite philosophical term, an entirely objective position towards all *forms* of religion, but distinguishes them carefully from religion itself. Religion reveals itself in every one of these forms more or less imperfectly—and so he studies them all. No religion is beneath his notice: on the contrary, the deeper he digs the nearer he gets to religion's source. He follows the example of the philologist, who does not despise the language of Mlecchas or barbarians, or whatever other nickname be given to people speaking a language one does not understand, and who takes as great an interest in the Hottentot or Australian dialects as in Sanscrit or Arabic. He knows nothing of heretics, schismatics, or heathens; to him, as a man of science, all religious forms are simply objects of investigation, different languages in which the religious spirit expresses itself, means which enable him to penetrate

to a knowledge of religion itself, supreme above all. It is not his vocation to champion any of these forms as the best, or perhaps the only true form—he leaves that to the apologists. Nor does he attempt to purify, reform, or develop religion itself—that is the task of the divine and the prophet. And this scientific investigation is certainly not without practical benefit. It may bring to light the superiority of one cult to another; it may have a powerful influence on the purification and development of religion itself; it may, by showing religion to be rooted in man's inmost nature, vindicate its right to exist better than any long philosophical arguments; and such testimony is all the more valuable because unsought, unbiassed, and undesigned. For this neither is nor can be the goal of the science of religion. If such were its practical aim, the fruits which it now yields for practice, and for religious thought and life, would lose their value. For genuine science, which seeks nothing but the truth, is a light by which truth is made manifest; and therefore all that is good and true, genuine and beautiful, all that supplies actual wants and is therefore wholesome for humanity, need never fear the light. The rights of the religious conscience must not be limited; but science, too, vindicates her right to extend her investigations over everything human, and therefore over so important and mighty a manifestation of man's inmost nature as religion has ever been and ever will be.

It is an error to suppose that one cannot take up such an impartial scientific position without being a sceptic; that one is disqualified for an impartial investigation if one possesses fixed and earnest religious convictions of one's own; that a man is incapable of appreciating other forms of religion if he is warmly attached to the Church or religious community in which he has been brought up. Do we love our parents, to whom we owe so much, the less because, when we have come to years of discretion, we have discovered some of their faults and foibles? Does our mother-tongue sound less pleasantly in our ears because we have made acquaintance with the beauty and vigour of other languages? I, at least, do not love the religious community to which I belong the less because I strive to appreciate, by the light of our science, what is truly religious in other forms.

From other quarters also the new science is regarded with suspicion. The old theology is afraid that our science will try to supersede it. Let us consider this from two different points of view. We may understand the term "science of religion" in a wider or in a narrower sense. If we regard it as destined to unite all the studies which have the investigation of religion for their object, and which therefore also include Christian theology (excluding always practical theology, which, being the theory of a practice, cannot really be called a science), it will by no means supersede

theology, but will embrace it and, though theology has hitherto thought itself independent, will make it a mere province, albeit the chief in its vast domains. This sounds all very well in the abstract, and seems perfectly logical; but it would be entirely unpractical, and would only injure both branches of study. And the reason is, not only that we can hardly regard a knowledge of our own religion, whatever it may be, as a mere department of a science embracing all religions—just as little as we can treat the history of our own country as a mere chapter of general history, or place the study of our mother-tongue on a level with that of all the rich and varied languages of the world,—the reason is, that theology and the science of religion differ in kind. There are just as many theologies as there are ethical religions, or what their votaries deem revealed religions; but there is only one science of religion, although, like other sciences, and indeed every different theology, it embraces different schools. The business of the science of religion is to investigate and to explain; it desires to know what religion is, and why we are religious; but the task of theology is to study, explain, justify, and if possible to purify, one given form of religion, by fathoming its oldest records, by reforming, by harmonising it with new needs, and thus furthering its development.

Let me again illustrate my meaning from the science of language. It is certain that special linguistic studies

and philology are in a sense independent of that science, and have their own methods and aims. I would even go a step further, and distinguish the general and historical study of religions, which observes, collects, combines, compares, and classifies facts in their order of development, as well as all special theologies, from the science of religion, which founds upon the results of these investigations, and utilises them for its purpose of determining what the religion manifested in all these phenomena essentially is, and whence it proceeds. And so, like the science of language in relation to grammatical, lexicographical, and philological studies, the science of religion recognises the independence of the special branches which provide her with material for her speculation, and of theology likewise, each within its respective sphere, while she herself forms the crown, or rather the centre, to which they all converge.

For, however sovereign each of these two branches of study may be in its own domain, they cannot possibly be independent of each other without great injury to both. The one could not exist without the other. Our science could not exist; for, without the materials supplied by anthropology and history, she could do nothing more than erect a specious edifice of mere hypotheses and fancies, an amusement by no means harmless, in which the speculative philosophers of a former generation used to delight. Nor could theology, whether

comparative or special, exist alone; for it is only when continuing in touch with the science of religion that theology deserves the name of science and becomes a *scientia* instead of a mere *eruditio*. Facts accurately observed and faithfully recorded may be very curious; but, if not explained, not correlated, they are curious and nothing more. Theology indeed teaches what a certain religion is, what it demands of its adherents, how it has arisen and attained its present condition, and even what it ought really to be in accordance with its own principles; but if it does not compare its religious system with others, and above all test it by the laws of the evolution of religious life, which the science of religion alone can reveal, it can neither wholly comprehend nor fully appreciate its own religion. It may then be a branch of knowledge, not without practical use, but it is not a science.

But the science of religion is far from imposing its laws upon the preparatory studies, or dictating to them the issue of their researches. On the contrary, it fully recognises their liberty of action and simply awaits the results. It accepts them, always reserving its right to test them and to examine the ground on which they rest, and then utilises them in its own way. But it indicates the direction in which the investigation must move in order to yield fruit for science. It lights a beacon which enables historians and theologians to observe better, and understand

better, the facts they deal with. And then in its turn it hands over the result of its study to the central science—that general philosophy which strives to explain the unity of all creation.

We have thus defined the character of our science. It is a special science or branch of study, and does not belong to general philosophy; but it is the philosophical part of the investigation of religious phenomena—a study which seeks to penetrate to their foundations. It is not a philosophic creed, or a dogmatic system of what is commonly called natural theology, or a philosophy with a religious tinge, and still less a philosophy regarding God Himself. All this is beyond its province. It leaves these matters to theologians and metaphysicians. It is in fact literally the philosophy of religion, according to the present use of that term, which is deservedly gaining ground: a philosophy which we must have the courage to reform, in accordance with the demands of science in its present state of development.

I cannot, therefore, include it among the natural sciences, however high be the authority of those who assign it such a position. We should in that case be obliged to stretch the conception of natural science so far as to deprive it of all precise meaning. Religion is certainly rooted in man's nature—that is, it springs from his inmost soul. But we may truly say of religion, as it has been said of language, that it is neither entirely

a natural nor an artificial product. It would be idle to attempt to apply the exact methods of the natural sciences to our science; such an attempt would only expose one to self-deception and grievous disappointment.

Nor is our science historical in the usual sense of the term. A good deal of the material that it uses is historical, for it must strive to understand religion, as it now exists, by studying what it formerly was. We shall soon see that its first task is to trace the evolution of religion, and it is needless to say that this cannot be done without historical research. The time has long since passed when people fancied they could philosophise about religion without caring for its history. The relation between the philosophy and the history of religion was eloquently and cogently expounded some years ago in this very city of Edinburgh by Principal John Caird in the last of his Croall Lectures.[1] In Germany, the home of speculative philosophy, Hegel endeavoured, in his own way, to make the history of religion the handmaid of philosophy, but the materials at his command were necessarily scanty. With ampler materials Pfleiderer has built his philosophy of religion on historical foundations. And how vigorously Professor Max Müller, in his recent Gifford Lectures, has emphasised the importance and the absolute indispensability of historical studies, I need

[1] Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, Glasgow, 1880, chap. x.

not remind you. I should be the last to dispute this, as I should then have to disavow my own past. I have been engaged in historical inquiries more than anything else, and all the more considerable works I have published have been of a historical kind. My late friend Kuenen used to say, "I am nothing if not critical." I would venture to say of myself, "I am nothing if not historical." Yet I believe that the science of religion requires a broader foundation than history in the ordinary sense of the word. Historical research must precede and pave the way for our science; but it does not belong to it. If I have minutely described all the religions in existence, their doctrines, myths, customs, the observances they inculcate, and the organisation of their adherents, besides tracing the different religious forms, their origin, bloom, and decay, I have merely collected the materials with which the science of religion works. And, indispensable as this is, it is not enough. Anthropology or the science of man, sociology or the science of our social relations, psychology or the science of man's inmost being, and perhaps other sciences besides, must yield their contributions in order to help us to learn the true nature and origin of religion, and thus to reach our goal.

I have said that the exact method of natural science is not applicable to the science of religion; nor do I think that the historical method will suffice. I agree with Professor Flint that by the historical method we

obtain only history. But we want more than that; we wish to understand and to explain. The strict historians have no right to ridicule what is called philosophic history, as they are fond of doing; but they are right in maintaining that this is not proper history, but a chapter in philosophy, and they are quite right in repudiating any obligation to add philosophical speculation to what we demand of them.

I therefore think that we need not hesitate openly to proclaim the philosophical character of our science, and to apply to it the method adapted to all philosophical branches of science—namely, the deductive. Not the one-sided empirical method, which culminates in positivism and only ascertains and classifies facts, but is powerless to explain them. Nor the one-sided historical method, which yields exclusively historical results. Nor again the so-called genetic-speculative method, a mixture of history and philosophy, which lacks all unity. Still less, I must hasten to add, the warped speculative method which has no foothold on earth, but floats in the clouds. For, when I speak of the deductive method, I mean this speculative method least of all. On the contrary, our deductive reasoning must start from the results yielded by induction, by empirical, historical, and comparative methods. What religion is, and whence it arises, we can only ascertain from religious phenomena. Our inmost being can only be known by its outward manifestations. To wander

in our speculations away from what has been discovered and established by anthropological and historical research, is to enter on a false path. To start from any *a priori* position, and to erect a system upon it, is a waste of time and leads to nothing. There must of course be a division of labour. None of us can do everything. One can hardly be at once an anthropologist, a historian, a psychologist, and a philosopher. Even in a single branch of science it is but few who are entirely at home. He who wishes to study the science of religion must survey the whole region, and must have traversed it in every direction; he must know what the researches of anthropologists and historians, and the discoveries of archæologists, have yielded for the history of religion, what is merely probable, and what still uncertain or positively false. In short, he must be master of the material with which he has to work, although others have discovered it for him. And it is not only desirable, but I believe indispensable, that he should have taken part himself, for a time at least, in exploring and clearing the ground, and have studied at least two religions in the original sources. It is a long process, but it is the only way to achieve lasting results. People often think that much less will suffice. Nowadays there is probably no one who would venture to create a system out of mere poetic imagination. But not a few fancy that it is enough to consult the best authorities—or at least

those reputed the best, which are often untrustworthy —and by reading these books to gain some idea of religion and thus lay a foundation upon which to build. Others, still more foolish, content themselves with studying a single manual of religions, and then seriously imagine that their philosophy stands on historic ground. Nay, I even know a case in which the author of a philosophy of religion, "auf modern-wissenschaftlicher Grundlage," had consulted no history of religions beyond a sketch of mine, published many years ago, a mere outline without light or shade, at all events without colour, but which left all the freer scope to the philosopher's imagination. However flattering it was for me to be chosen by this author as his guide, he would have been wiser to consult others also, and, above all, to use his own eyes. Can we wonder that, when one is content with so superficial a preparation, his slight and airy structure is speedily superseded by another, and that each advance made by research, each new discovery, renders his work more and more useless? Can we wonder that many a meritorious work on the morphology or on the ontology of religion, or, in other words, on the evolution or on the origin and essence of religion, however profoundly and vigorously conceived, however ingeniously composed, yet leaves us unsatisfied, because solid facts rise to our minds which are not explained by our author, and which even contradict his con-

clusions? Though it is not always possible, and therefore not obligatory, that we should ourselves dig up and collect the materials with which we build, we must at all events be able to judge of them, and they must be solid and sufficient.

The next question is, how we are to handle our material and make it serviceable for the great object of our science—that of studying religion in its life and growth, in its nature and its origin. We are confronted with innumerable phenomena: religious conceptions and doctrines, which are gathered from hymns and proverbs, from books of the law and confessions of faith, from preachings and prophesyings; religious observances and ordinances, which together constitute the cult, and in which the devout express their disposition towards the Deity; religious communities of all kinds, either connected with the State, or more or less independent of it; a great and imposing Church with a single visible head, extending over the whole world, yet one in him, and one in sacred language, rite, and doctrine; then, besides the Oriental rival which has separated from her, a number of Protestant Churches, mostly national, differing widely in doctrine and point of view, differing also in form of government; and further, various sects, small, but often very influential; Orders working in secret, but all the more powerful; parties and schools in conflict with each other, whence new communions sometimes arise—not to mention many other pheno-

mena more remote from our observation. Such an embarrassing wealth of materials must be sifted and classified. What is serviceable and what is not? Where shall we find most light? What is our best building material?

Opinions differ as to how this question should be answered. Some think that the nature of religion is best learned from mythology and from doctrine, and that the inquirer should therefore direct his attention mainly, though not exclusively, to these. Others maintain that the essentials of religion are to be sought for in the Church, its ordinances and ritual, and that dogma must only be regarded as a basis for union and for religious education. Others again, though not unconditionally agreeing with these last, think that a study of the cult, of traditional rites and usages, just because they remain longest in force and unaltered, bring us nearer to the oldest religion and the beginning of the evolution than the doctrine which is ever changing.

I have no doubt as to which of these parties I should join. Strictly speaking, none of them. For I think we should neglect nothing, but welcome everything that may give light. But if I must needs choose, I have no hesitation in joining the first of these parties. For in the doctrine, whatever be its form, mythological and poetical, or dogmatical and philosophical, I recognise the fountainhead of each religion. The chief thing of all in religion is doubtless its spirit, yet it is the

doctrine that affords us most light. Through it alone we learn what man thinks of his God and of his relation to Him. Cult, ritual, and ceremonies teach me nothing when I contemplate them, unless I have some explanation of their meaning. That they mean something, that they therefore had a definite significance when first introduced, is certain. People may, however, forget the significance and retain the custom alone, because it has been handed down to them; but in that case they are wont to attach a newly devised meaning to it. It is possible that Professor Hopkins is right, in his valuable work on 'The Religions of India,' in saying of the Brahmanic rites: "A minute description of these ceremonies would do little to further his [the curious reader's] knowledge of the religion, when once he grasps the fact that the sacrifice is but show. Symbolism without folk-lore, only with the imbecile imaginings of a daft mysticism, is the soul of it; and its outer form is a certain number of formulæ, mechanical movements, oblations, and slaughterings."[1] Once this was not the case, once the symbolism had a meaning, the formulæ were understood, the ceremonies were not merely mechanical. If we wish to learn that meaning, we must consult the mythology of which these forms and ceremonies were the reflection and the reproduction.[2]

Or shall we reverse the matter, and maintain that

[1] P. 210.

[2] Bergaigne, Rel. Védique, i. 24.

the mythology and doctrine must be ascertained from the ceremonial because they are derived from the latter, because they are a symbolic-mystic description of it? It seems incredible that so strange a proposition, which is indeed somewhat of a mystification, should be laid down and even stoutly defended by a scholar with a reputation to lose. Yet it is persistently advocated by M. Paul Regnaud, a French Sanscritist, who perhaps has a right to call himself a disciple of the lamented Bergaigne, but has no right to appeal to him for support in this instance. It is strange, at the end of this nineteenth century, how often we have to practise the Horatian *nil admirari*. What has become of the vaunted *bon sens* of the French? No doubt many a bold assertion, received at first with absolute incredulity, has ultimately turned out to be a truth, discovered by the genius of a great thinker, and triumphantly confirmed by further research. But I venture to say that this is not the case here, that the assertion is bold indeed, but that it will never find a place in science. One need only read half-a-dozen pages in which M. Regnaud states his argument in order to see that he can only maintain his thesis by explanations of texts and words which really obscure the former and distort the latter. The best refutation of this still-born doctrine is indeed the argument by which he attempts to support it.

In order to make acquaintance with religion itself,

which is a frame of mind adapted to the relation between man and his God, and thus becomes a definite sentiment towards God, we must attend to everything in which this frame of mind finds vent and this sentiment utters itself—to words as well as deeds, which together constitute the language of religion. But it is evident that observances have value for our research only where we know the conception attached to them by believers, and thus learn their significance. If that conception has not been handed down, either in the doctrine in general or in special records, or if it does not appear in the prayers and hymns associated with the observance, or in the attendant ceremonies, we then are confronted with a riddle the solution of which we can only guess. The old axiom that when two or more persons do the same thing, yet it is not the same thing, is here verified. A Sumerian text of the ancient Babylonian period says that the father lays down his son's life for his own. Thus did King Mesha of Moab, when, in view of the Jewish and Israelitish camp, he sacrificed his first-born son on the ramparts. And there is more than one Aryan tradition to the same effect, resting on similar views. An entirely different view is presented by the well-known narrative of Genesis. There Abraham is not required to sacrifice his son to save himself, but in order to show his steadfast faith and obedience. Or, to take another example, in the New Testament Jesus is said to have been

anointed by two women, and some exegetes consider the two narratives to be different versions of the same event. Now, although both pour costly perfume over the Master's body, the one does it with the reverential love of a penitent sinner, while the other not only shows the overflowing love of a grateful friend, but, as she anoints the head and not the feet of Jesus, she at the same time foreshadows His consecration as the Messiah, whereas Jesus, though greatly commending her, disclaims the augury, and accepts the anointment as for His burial, for His consecration to death.

Or take an observance which is intended to be a repetition of the symbolical act performed by Christ in the midst of His disciples on the last evening of His life, and which, according to the apostolic tradition, He commanded them to continue in His memory—the last Supper. The whole of Christendom, with a few slight exceptions, has kept up this observance. The Reformers have rejected several sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church ; but this sacrament, along with that of baptism, they and their Churches have retained. Need I add that the observance is only outwardly and historically the same, and that the widely different significance attached to it by Catholics, Lutherans, and Evangelicals, by Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, renders it a very different ceremony in each case ? In short, in the science as well as in the history of religion, those observances whose religious significance can be dis-

covered and traced are alone valuable. Conceptions mythically or dogmatically, symbolically or philosophically expressed, must ever be the fountainhead of our knowledge of that religious spirit which is the true essence of religion.

These are merely introductory reflections, in which I have endeavoured to convey my conception of the science of religion and of the method applicable to it. In the following lectures I shall try to develop the principles of the science, to indicate how it works, and to state the general results it has yielded. As already pointed out, the task of our science is to make us acquainted with religion, to enable us to trace its life and growth, and thus to penetrate to its origin and its inmost nature. Our study thus naturally divides itself into two main parts—(1) the morphological, which is concerned with the constant changes of form resulting from an ever-progressing evolution; and (2) the ontological, which treats of the permanent elements in what is changing, the unalterable element in transient and ever-altering forms—in a word, the origin and the very nature and essence of religion. The first of these parts will be the subject of the present course. The ontological part will be reserved for the Second Course, and, if God vouchsafes me health and strength, will form the conclusion of the task I have to-day begun.

LECTURE II.

CONCEPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION.

THE first task of our science is, as already pointed out, to survey religion in its development. At the outset, however, we must define what we mean by development; but I shall not attempt as yet to determine the essentials of religious development, for these we can only discuss after having traced its whole course. Such an attempt would be premature.

What, then, do we generally understand when we speak of development? This is the first question that must be answered. And it is necessary, because people often have a mistaken notion both of the term and of our understanding of it. It is necessary also because the term is a figure borrowed from natural history, and is only applied by analogy to man's higher nature or spiritual life. Development is growth. From the green bud the flower bursts forth as from its sheath, and reveals the wealth and brilliance of its

colours. From the tiny acorn springs up the mighty oak in all its majesty. The man in the prime of his strength, the woman in the summer of her beauty, have once been helpless children, and we know that their growth began even before their birth. These are instances of what we call development. But the term is not applied to physical life alone. We use it also in speaking of mental endowments, of artistic skill, of individual character, and generally of civilisation, art, science, and humanity. We therefore think that, in view of what the anthropological-historical investigation of religion has brought to light, we are fully entitled to apply the term to religion also. And for doing so we may appeal to no less an authority than Jesus Himself, who compared the kingdom of heaven to a grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of all seeds, but grows up into so mighty a tree that the fowls of the air lodge in the branches thereof. What else does this mean but that the seed sown by Him in the bosom of humanity was destined to develop into a mighty religious community?

But although we are obliged to use a figure of speech in order to translate a very complex fact into a single word, especially when that fact is of a spiritual nature, the figure is but a simile which needs further explanation. What do we imply when we speak of development? In the first place, we imply that the object undergoing development is a unity; that the

changes we observe are not like those that proceed from the caprices of fickle man, as the clothes we wear change with the freaks of fashion; that the oak already potentially exists in the acorn, and the man in the child. The one does not merely succeed or supersede the other, but the one grows out of the other. Development is, to quote an American scholar, "a continuous progressive change according to certain laws and by means of resident forces."[1] In the second place, we imply that each phase of the evolution has its value, importance, and right of existence, and that it is necessary to give birth to a higher phase, and continues to act in that higher phase. If I uproot an oak and plant a beech in its place, I cannot say that this beech has developed out of the oak. Nor can I say so if I appoint an experienced man to an office in place of an untrained youth. Or, to keep within our own province, when certain positivists say that morality, or when Strauss teaches that art, must supersede religion, they have no right to call this development. Neither morality nor art have grown from religion; they have long existed side by side with it; they cannot even be said to supersede it. Those who teach such doctrine maintain nothing short of this, that religion belongs to a transient period of human development, that a time is coming when man will need it no longer, that

[1] Professor Le Conte, cited by Dr Lyman Abbott in the 'New World,' 1892, No. 1, p. 1.

it has fulfilled its mission and run its course; and not only that it is becoming extinct, but that nothing requires to be put in its place. In short, the hypothesis of the evolution of religion rests on the conviction of the unity and independence of the religious life throughout all its changes of form.

But it is not enough to have determined the conception of development in general; we must also see what is understood by the development of religion in particular. This by no means implies that the religions and the sects of every kind and extent known to history — many of which still exist—are constantly developing. To some extent doubtless they are, but the development is not continuous. All religions—that is, all organisations of the religious life of a given community and period—develop; but, like every form of social life, for a time only. All have their periods of birth, growth, bloom, and decline. Many have for ever quitted the stage of the world's history. As there are dead languages, so there are dead religions. Many last for centuries; some have been short-lived; others still exist, but in so fossil a condition that they can hardly be said to be still living and developing: they exist, but nothing more, clinging to some ancient tradition from which they dare not swerve an inch. If they are national religions, like the Hellenic, or state religions, like the Roman, they share the fate of the state or the nation, and live and die with it. It may

even happen that they lose all vitality earlier than the state or nation, and are only kept alive artificially by the authority of government, but without satisfying the religious needs of the majority. The religion of the Roman empire is a striking instance of this. If they are less inseparably bound up with a state or a people, their bloom or decay, their expansion and decline, depend on other causes; but to them also the law of transience equally applies. In such cases, therefore, the idea of evolution is relative only. But we shall see that this transitoriness of religion is precisely one of the strongest proofs of the development of religion. Languages, states, peoples die, but mankind does not. Religions—that is, the forms in which religion manifests itself—die, but religion itself does not. Though ever changing in form, religion lives like mankind and with mankind. *Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.*

And accordingly the development of religion does not imply that religion develops locally or temporarily, in one form or another, but that religion, as distinguished from the forms it assumes, is constantly developed in mankind. Its development may be described as the evolution of the religious idea in history, or better as the progress of the religious man, or of mankind as religious by nature. In man—not the individual man, but mankind—never stationary, but ever advancing, who precisely in this respect is

superior to the lower animals, religion, being a part of his inmost life, necessarily develops with him. If he advances in knowledge, in mastery over the powers of nature, in mental and moral insight, his religion must keep pace with that advance by virtue of the law of the unity of the human mind, a law which we shall afterwards find to be the chief law of religious development also. Here, then, is the theory founded upon the results of historical research, a hypothesis if you please, but one of those working hypotheses rightly so called, because they show us the proper direction of our investigation. To substantiate this hypothesis will be the aim of our whole exposition.

Before we enter upon it, however, several further points require to be cleared up, and several possible objections answered.

First of all, let me repeat emphatically, and the more so because this matter is often misapprehended, that development of religion does not mean development of religious externals. We cannot even properly speak of the spontaneous development of religious conceptions or doctrine, of religious observances and ritual. This would be a misuse of the term. These change, they are modified; not, however, spontaneously, but designedly and of set purpose. Conceptions, dogmas, long prevalent because people deemed them the fittest expression of religious truth, and indeed sometimes confounded them with the truth itself, are contro-

verted, at first by one or more religious thinkers, and then by others in their footsteps; and at last, when their criticisms appear justified, and when the majority, or at least their leaders, come to the same conclusion, though not without bitter, fierce, and sometimes bloody opposition, these old dogmas are either materially modified or are superseded by entirely new ones. The same thing happens in the case of religious observances or forms of worship. They are more tenacious and survive longer. But if they are connected with a class of manners and customs long disused, to a past state of society, if they wound the susceptibilities or even the conscience of a more civilised generation, they are doomed to decay. They fall more and more into neglect. Prophetic natures will testify against them with righteous scorn. Superficial pioneers of enlightenment will smile at them as old-fashioned customs of which no reasonable man can understand the drift or the use. Most people, in fact, are ignorant of their real meaning, because the very form, intelligible enough to an earlier generation, has become strange to them. Yet neither thoughtless derision, nor prophetic testimony, nor indifference will suffice to abolish the old institution. Some out of veneration for what they deem a sacred tradition, others from a regard for supposed political, social, or ecclesiastical interests, but most people from mere habit, will remain faithful to it. Nay, the less able

they are to explain it, the more ardently will they fight for it. But at last even its most obstinate champions begin to see that they are running the risk of losing all by their persistence, and that it is urgently necessary to replace the dead form by others better adapted to the wants of a new era.

Changes made designedly are therefore not development itself, but are the results of it and are promoted by it. Conceptions and observances which expressed the creed of many generations have ceased to satisfy, because religion itself has developed, because the disposition, sentiment, and attitude of mind which determine the relation of man to his God have become purer, and his conception of that relation therefore clearer, with the result that higher demands are made on the forms of worship. For the present we pass by the question whether the religious sentiment precedes the conception, and whether the conception precedes the observance. Nor do we moot the further question, whether religion originates in man's conscience or in his reason. All we now maintain is that man's general disposition and his whole views of life and the world are necessarily reflected in the ideas he forms of his God or gods, and of their relation towards him; that, so far as possible, he transfers his sentiments and views to his God, and that whatever change takes place in them effects a change in what is termed his conception of God. Beliefs may be formed by

imagination and thought, but in this case the "issues of life" flow from the heart also. A well-known ancient philosopher, disgusted with anthropomorphism, and deeming it unreasonable that every human passion, foible, and misdeed should be ascribed to the gods, maintained that men represented their gods as men, just as the beasts, if they had gods, would represent them as beasts. He was mistaken. Men have embodied their gods in every variety of form—as beasts, trees, plants, and even stones—and a time comes in the course of man's development when even the human form ceases to satisfy him. At all events, it is certain that he cannot rest content with a conception of his god which is repugnant to his conscience and his reason, or conflicts with his views of life. When theologians and philosophers argue in favour of their creeds, why do they so rarely convince others who think differently? Because the latter *are* different. As they are, so they must believe. In accordance with the disposition of the man, his god will be a peaceable but austere Varuṇa, a fierce, warlike drunken Indra, a gloomy and bloody S'iva, delighting in cruel self-mutilation, a kindly, gentle Vishṇu, a Melek to whom children are sacrificed, or a wanton Canaanitish Baal. In the ethical preaching of the Jewish prophets of the eighth century before Christ, God is represented as holy in a different sense from the Yahve of their ancestors, as a God too pure to behold iniquity, and

preferring mercy to sacrifice. Can we wonder that God's sovereignty and free grace form the foundation of the theology of that great Reformer John Calvin, who with iron hand transformed profligate Geneva into a theocratic state after his own ideal, who deemed obedience the first of virtues, whose deep sense of religion, powerful mind, and inflexible character even his opponents cannot fail to admire? Lastly, what preaching should we expect from Him who was moved with compassion for the crowds that He saw like sheep without a shepherd, who called to Him the weary and heavy-laden to give rest to their souls, who commended the widow's mite, who was the friend of publicans and sinners? What preaching but that of a God who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, of a Father who not only lovingly embraces the repentant prodigal, but addresses the envious and refractory elder brother in words of adorable forbearance—"Child, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine!"

Hence, when we perceive religious conceptions—conceptions of God's nature and of His relation to man—and the observances which are influenced and modified by them, in process of change, we may be sure that they have been preceded by an inward change which we may define as religious development. We study these phenomena—the conceptions and the observances of religion—in order to penetrate to what is concealed

behind them. In their changes we discern the revelation of an inward life, a process of continual advance. And therefore the very fact that religions and churches do not endure for ever, but have their periods of growth, prime, and decay, affords a proof that religion itself, of which they are the various temporary embodiments, is continually progressing. Were it not for this ever-progressing, invisible, yet not imperceptible or immaterial development, doctrines and rites would themselves endure for ages, religions and Churches would be imperishable, for they would always satisfy unaltered needs. In these incessant changes and vicissitudes we therefore discern, not a puzzling, but a grand and instructive spectacle—the labour of the human spirit to find fitter and fuller expression for the religious idea as it becomes ever clearer, and for religious needs as they become ever loftier—not the mere fickle play of human caprice, but, to use the language of faith, the eternal working of the divine Spirit.

But people have objections, if not to the doctrine of development in general, at least to our method and to our unconditional application of it, objections which I must not pass over in silence. "From the changes," they will doubtless say, "or improvements if you will, in doctrine and worship you always infer religious development. Is the conclusion always justified? Are the data from which you argue always trustworthy, always genuine and well-meant? Above all, are they

always religious, and may they not be of an entirely different nature?" I am far from disputing this, and it suggests caution in drawing conclusions. Appearances may deceive, but they only deceive the superficial observer; nor did I say that we were blindly to accept them all, but rather that we must carefully study, sift, and scrutinise them. People may profess a doctrine without really meaning it, they may perform religious observances without applying their minds to them, they may go through all the forms of a higher religion without understanding anything of them; but in the long-run they can only mislead the simple and credulous many. For a higher form of religion may be imposed on a people by authority—a prince, a priesthood, a leading minority may forcibly suppress the externals of a rude folk-religion; but no sooner is the grasp of the master or the moral supremacy of the enlightened shaken off than the religion which was thought suppressed again rears its head, and it becomes clear that the mass of the people has failed to advance a single step. No one would cite the condition of the Jewish people under King Josiah as a proof that they had greatly progressed in purity of religion. The king probably flattered himself that he had firmly established in his country the Mosaic law, according to the book found by Hilkiah, and that all opposition to it was rooted out. Yet it soon appeared that the majority of the nation were still secretly

attached to their local gods, and that they attributed the disasters under which they groaned not to unbelief in the Yahve of the prophets, but to their neglect of the worship of the Queen of Heaven.

Changes in religious forms are not always of a religious nature, and such, therefore, afford no proof of religious development. "What you regard as development," it may be objected, "is often a mere concession to the demands of more refined taste or higher civilisation, to a wider knowledge of nature and the world, to greater humanity or morality, and is not a provision for higher spiritual needs." This may sometimes be the case, in an early stage at least. But what does this prove? Merely that external influences also affect the growth of religion, which, like all other growth, is furthered by assimilation. It is just a proof of the development of religion that it is able to appropriate the fruits of development in different, but cognate, spiritual provinces. Surely it was not merely an æsthetic need, not merely obedience to the demands of higher artistic taste, that led the Greeks to give up representing their gods as a huge column, like the ancient Hêra of Argos, or as a startling compound of the attributes of fertility, like the image of the Ephesian Artemis that fell down from heaven—but to represent them in pure human form, and to replace the rude wooden idols, once so sacred, the archaic images with their stiff awkward postures and vacant smile, by

figures full of grace and majesty, with countenances of sublime and godlike expression. According to the unanimous testimony of all who saw it, the Zeus of Olympia, chiselled by Phidias, was not only the masterpiece of that greatest sculptor of antiquity, the mature fruit of his creative genius, but also the purest utterance of his fervent piety. "Zeus himself must have appeared to him, or he must have ascended into heaven in order to behold God," exclaimed one of their poets. And even the Roman conqueror, who, like his compatriots of that time, was no judge of art, felt, when he entered the temple, as if he were in the presence of Jupiter himself.

It cannot, in fact, be a matter of indifference to religion that its conceptions become clearer, more rational, more in accordance with the reality brought to light by science, and therefore truer—that its manifestations become more refined, more attractive, purer, more moral, and its observances more humane. And certainly the prevalent disposition of mankind cannot but produce a corresponding disposition in the minds of the pious.

I now come to the last objection, the objection to the general application of the theory of development. The argument in the main is as follows. Among the religions of the world two chief classes may be distinguished, those that have grown, and those that have been founded. Professor Whitney was not the first

to make this distinction, for it had long been pointed out by others, but he gives the best description of it. These are his words: "There is no more marked distinction among religions than the one we are called upon to make between a race-religion—which, like a language, is the collective product of the wisdom of a community, the unconscious growth of generations—and a religion proceeding from an individual founder, who, as leading representative of the better insight and feeling of his time (for otherwise he would meet with no success), makes head against formality and superstition, and recalls his fellow-men to sincere and intelligent faith in a new body of doctrines, of specially moral aspect, to which he himself gives shape and adherence."[1] In the first of these cases, it is said, you may speak of development, or, as Whitney calls it, "unconscious growth," but in the second you cannot. Here individual founders have been at work; there is no growth here, but a planting, a cultivation, by human agency and of set purpose.

I will not here repeat my former criticism,[2] or that of Professor Max Müller before me, on Whitney's description of these two categories of religions: it consists mainly in a demonstration that on both sides of the "line of demarcation" there is the work of individual founders, and there is also "unconscious growth." I

[1] 'Princeton Review,' May 1881, p. 451.

[2] Art. "Religions" in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.'

will only further note that Whitney himself calls "the individual founders" "the leading representatives of the better insight and feeling of their time," thus admitting by implication that their appearance is a consequence of development. For in the words, "for otherwise they would have no success," he expressly indicates that religious development may be guided by them into a definite channel, but that it is not rendered superfluous by their work, and that this constant growth is the necessary condition of the permanence of their institution.

The chief objection, however, is still unanswered. Grant that the theory of development is applicable to new religions, because the founders, children of their time and people, only voice what has been stirring inarticulately in the minds and hearts of their contemporaries and compatriots, and only give a form to needs already felt by the best people around them. But when the new doctrine is proclaimed by missionaries to other nations, and is accepted by them, with the result that they reject what they had hitherto worshipped, forsake their ancestral gods for the new God, and thus change their religion altogether, this is surely not a case of development. For there lacks here the first of these conditions of development we have made acquaintance with, unity, continuity; the one does not grow out of the other in this case, but the one is ousted by the other.

This seems undeniable, and yet it is far from being so. To the superficial observer, indeed, it appears as if a simple change of religion had here taken place, just as one discards a worn-out garment and puts on a new one. This is the popular view of the matter, but it is a false view. And the error is supported by what is seen to happen at the outset. Those who promulgate a new religion, whether as zealous apostles by their preaching, or like Mohammed or Charlemagne by the sword, demand the total abjuration of the old and the unconditional acceptance of the new. They overthrow what they believed to be false gods, they desecrate the altars, and defile the holy places. All that reminds of the old cult must be rooted out. But ere long it is discovered that they have not entirely succeeded. The ancient faith has only bowed before the mighty storm; but as soon as calm is restored it raises its head again, either unabashed, in its old form, or in modified shape and under new names, while preserving its former substance. The ancient gods return, some still retaining their old characters and the parts they played in the ancient mythology, as demons, but most of them as angels, saints, or prophets, and, in the latter case at least, they are more honoured than before. Their ancient seats are now mostly converted into their burial-places, to which pilgrims flock to pay their devotions. The observance of their holy days, and especially of their great annual festivals, is soon

revived; prohibitions against them avail nothing; ecclesiastical authority has to acquiesce and to rest content with giving them a different complexion or modifying them in some details; and, naïvely enough, their ancient so-called heathen names remain in vogue (*e.g.*, Yule, Easter, and Whitsuntide). In short, I can see nothing here but assimilation. Or if it is thought that something more takes place, it may be compared with the grafting of a fresh branch on an old stem, or with the crossing of two different breeds, which produces a new variety and thus helps rather than hinders development. This subject deserves closer study than we can now devote to it. But, whichever of the two last-named views may ultimately appear the right one, the popular notion that a new religion can be mechanically spread and adopted must certainly be rejected.

Permit me to illustrate my meaning by a striking example. I shall not select for the purpose one of the two great world-religions, Buddhism and Christianity, which, having sprung up within limited circles, and having been rejected, after a longer or shorter struggle, by the very peoples from which they emanated, now count their adherents by many millions; nor shall I select their mighty rival Mohammedanism, which can only be called a world-religion with certain reservations; for this would require a longer exposition than our limits permit. In the case of Christianity you can

easily make the application for yourselves. For every one, even without having made a special study of the subject, must see what an immense difference, not only in form of worship and organisation, but in doctrine, spirit, and character, subsists between the numerous churches to which the preaching of the Gospel has given birth—the Greek-Russian, the smaller Oriental, the Roman Catholic, and the various Protestant churches—so that one is tempted to regard them as hardly related to one another at all. I select Parseeism as my example.

Where this religion arose—in Bactria as some think, in Eastern Irân, according to others, or perhaps in the North-West—is still unascertained, but certainly not in Persia, nor, as I am convinced, in Media proper. The precise date of its origin is also unknown, though we may certainly place it before the time of the Achæmenides, or even, as seems to me justifiable, before, or at least as early as, the period of the Median empire. But this does not materially affect our argument. We are only now concerned with the relative antiquity of the writings which form the Avesta, the sacred scriptures of the Mazdayasnans in particular. A considerable part of the texts, classified, probably at a somewhat late period, in accordance with the requirements of the cult, is written in a dialect related indeed to that of the others, yet differing from them in more than one respect, and more archaic. No one, unless

blinded by love for his own hypotheses, denies that the texts in this older dialect are really older than the others, as indeed was the conviction of the ancient Persians themselves. Now in these oldest texts, especially in the Gâthas, or hymns, which form their staple, we find in its original purity the then new doctrine, as laid down by the Saoshyañts, the prophets of salvation, as the revelation of God to Zarathushtra, or, according to some scholars, as proclaimed by Zarathushtra himself. The passages in prose, written in the same idiom, are probably later, and show that the doctrine was by this time somewhat modified, though in essentials the same. The foundation, and at the same time the foremost requirement, of this preaching is belief in Mazda Ahura, the all-wise Lord, the God, who made heaven and earth and all that is therein, and governs everything with wisdom. Beside him, and closely associated with him, are six satellites, forming with him the sacred seven. But they are by no means his equals: in one passage he is said to have created them, in another they are called his children; of his own birth there is no mention. So little personified are these beings, and so often are their names —Good Sense, the best Righteousness, the Wished-for Kingdom, Welfare, and Immortality — used as mere abstract terms, that the sole really personal being in the doctrine of the Gâthas is Mazda Ahura himself. Even Sraosha, the genius of obedience and revelation,

is not as yet a clearly defined figure, while the ancient deities Aramati and Aryaman are only retained in the system as vague personifications of the piety of the good peasant and of the friendship of believers. From the first, two spirits, a benevolent and a malevolent, Speñta and Angra Mainyu, are in antagonism; but the former is not yet identified with Mazda Ahura, while the latter is not yet opposed to him as an almost equally powerful combatant, Mazda being placed above both. Were it not for the practices of worshipping Atar, the fire of Mazda Ahura, the visible manifestation of Asha Vahishta, who is the genius of all that is becoming, orderly, regular, and holy, or, in a word, of true righteousness, and of invoking the pure waters, the manifestation of Aramati—we might have called the system monotheistic. In substance it is so, though not strictly maintained. The Zarathushtrian prophets of salvation inveigh no less emphatically against the existing polytheism than did the Jewish prophets, from the eighth century before Christ onwards, against the Ba'alîm. The Daêvas, the national gods whom the Iranians had in common with their kinsmen the Indians, are entirely repudiated by the reformers. Their name is now a name for evil spirits, and has become synonymous with the ancient Drujas. Their worship is inexorably and unconditionally forbidden. And the whole mythology, the still prevailing folk-creed, is carefully and purposely ignored; even the sacred tradition is only

once alluded to. There is no doubt that the preachers of the Zarathushtrian reform aimed at entirely rooting out the belief in the Daêvas and their worship, and substituting for it a belief in Mazda Ahura, with a purer form of worship; and in spite of the opposition they encountered and the persecution of which they complained, they still hoped to attain their end, and were confident of the triumph of their cause.

Was this confidence justified, this hope to be fulfilled? To some extent certainly. The new doctrine was accepted where it was at first preached. Tradition has preserved the names of several noteworthy and influential men who took part in the work. One of them, Kava, "the wise singer," Vîshtâspa, is even said to have been a king. He formed a community which indeed adhered faithfully to the precepts of the new doctrine, but which must be regarded as having been only a small group of believers in the midst of adherents of the ancient faith, and which was harassed and persecuted by them in every possible way.

At last, however, Mazda-worship was adopted by all the Iranian peoples, and even by several other tribes, and became the national and state religion, perhaps of the Median, and at all events of the Persian empire. First all the eastern regions, afterwards those of the Medes, Persians, Parthians, and Armenians, were gradually converted to the Zarathushtrian doctrine. But this was not effected except at the cost

of its original purity. This is proved by the records which form the greater part of the Avesta and are written in the later dialect of the language. Several of the Daêvas, so abhorred by the sacred prophets, return: Haoma, the god of the heavenly cup of immortality, and his representative on earth, the juice pressed from the stalks of a sacred plant; Mithra, the highest god of the Medes and especially of the Persians, the triumphant god of Light, already worshipped by the Indo-Iranians, and, next to Varuṇa, by the Vedic Indians; Tistrya, a storm-god, identified with the star Sirius; and a number of others. And their worship is now not merely tolerated or connived at, but is inculcated in hymns composed in their honour, is practised under the authority of many saints and heroes of antiquity, especially Zarathushtra himself, and is commanded by Ahura Mazda. Nay, both of them even practise this cult themselves. Several modifications, however, were made in the conceptions of these gods, and sometimes the ethical elements in their character were placed in the foreground. They are no longer called Daêvas, and a somewhat lame attempt is made to transform them into Zarathushtrian Yazatas. They are ranked below Ahura Mazda, whose supremacy is maintained, in theory at least, and it is doubtless the rule that they are not to receive so great sacrifices as He and his satellites, and that they are not to be served in the manner in which

the Daêvas were worshipped. Yet all this does not prevent their service from being revived; and they are really, although people fear to call them so, the same Daêvas whom the faithful in their creed profess to hate, abhor, and abjure. All this shows that it was found impossible to root out the folk-creed and the folk-religion, and that it was found necessary, in order to spread the new doctrine over the whole country and to ensure its adoption by all the tribes, to make concessions to Polytheism and to Idolatry, both of which had been at first sternly rejected. All this proves, not that an existing lower religion was discarded in order to be replaced by a new and higher religion, but that the existing religion of Irân assimilated as much as it could from the Zarathushtrian doctrine, and thus, although it mutilated the doctrine and applied it very imperfectly, was itself reformed and proceeded to develop itself in this direction.

We shall therefore apply the theory of development, not to one category of religions alone, but to all. But is not this naturalism, disguised materialism, positivism, or whatever other name, hated by the many, you choose to give it? In other words, when we recognise such a development, subjected to certain laws, and produced by indwelling forces, do we not deny the agency, the revelation, the omnipotence of God? Not a whit more than by recognising development in the external and visible world. It appears to us that

God reveals Himself to the devout in the development, in the orderly and methodical progress, and in the life of religion more perfectly and gloriously than in the caprices of an inscrutable arbitrary will. Moreover, we are quite aware that science has her limits. She can show where there is growth, she can prove development and thereby explain phenomena, — that is her duty. But to explain how development takes place, what growth and life really are, is beyond her power, and is an insoluble mystery for even the profoundest science. What we vindicate for our science as her right is to trace the life of religion in its progress, and even to mount to its fountainhead, but she does not stir a single step beyond her own province, and leaves all religious convictions untouched.

Be it so. Science wishes to learn the origin and nature of religion. But need I for this purpose trace religion throughout its whole development? Why need I go back so far, and dwell so long on the study of the lower religions, when I possess the highest and the best, and know this from my own experience? And when I wish to know whence religion proceeds is it not enough for me to observe man, the religious people I see around me, people on the plane of the present development, and then as a self-conscious being look within myself and examine my own inmost nature? That is certainly necessary, but not sufficient. Let us admit that the most highly developed form of

religion best reveals the nature of religion. Let us assume that our form is the highest, as indeed every one thinks who sincerely believes in his religion, whether he be Mohammedan or Christian, Buddhist or Brahman, Zarathushtrian or Confucian. You and I are convinced that the purest and most genuinely human form of religion has been brought to light by the Gospel. But may it not be a blind faith? In the religion in which we have been brought up, the religion of our fathers, the religion of our youth, we have found consolation and strength, a light upon our path, a stimulus to all that is good and great; we are grateful for it, and we have learned to love it; and so long as it is the source of our higher life and our purest happiness we shall never forsake it.

But others too have found the same in their religion. And the only inference we can draw from this is that our religion is the best for us, and theirs for them, from different points of view. Science may respect these beliefs, and even recognise their relative rights, but cannot allow them the validity of proofs. She desires to know and account for every conviction. And how can I know whether a religion is the highest without comparing it with others? And even if I have discovered by comparison what form of religion best expresses the highest stage the development of religion can attain, this would still be insufficient. What we are concerned with in the last instance—a know-

ledge of the fixed, permanent, and unchangeable element in religion, and of its essential characteristics—we can only attain by gleaning it from the different forms which religion has assumed throughout the whole course of the world's history. In order to understand anything thoroughly we must know how it has come to be what we now perceive it to be. No knowledge of man is possible without embryology and biology. No knowledge of religion is possible without a knowledge of its origin and growth.

In the study of the development of religion, to which the following lectures will be devoted, we must attend to two distinct matters: first, to the various *steps* of development, usually so called; and secondly, to the *directions* in which religions develop in different surroundings and different periods.

The expression "steps" or "stages," though convenient, is not very accurate, as it indicates a succession of things placed one above another, not emanating from and growing out of each other, which is the process we mean. I should therefore prefer the term *μόρφαι*, or "forms of existence," which conveys the idea more accurately, and I therefore call this first part of our scientific-philosophical task the morphological part. Anthropological-historical research has already paved the way for us by its morphological classification of religions; and this, therefore, we must first consider.

Our proper task will then be to show how one form not merely succeeds but grows out of another, and in such a way that the more developed form contains nothing essential that cannot be found, though in less perfect shape, or merely as a germ, in all the preceding forms from the very first.

What we mean by directions of development requires further explanation. It does not invariably, or even generally, happen that one religion is wholly transformed into another; but from the old form, either simultaneously or successively, proceed various new forms, which then develop, sometimes for centuries, independently and side by side. Each of these forms, by a one-sided elaboration of one leading religious idea, contributes to religious development; none of them singly, but all taken together, represent the religion of a period in the history of mankind. Such a one-sided elaboration of a single root-idea to its utmost consequences is necessary to make it the inalienable property of mankind, and at the same time, by its very one-sidedness, to awaken the need for other, and not less essential, elements of religion which it has for a time forced into the background. Thus we see arising from one and the same Judaism the three different parties of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes, and after them Christianity itself; and so, too, from one Vedic religion there

spring up, among others, the Pûrva and the Uttara-Mîmâṁsâ, the ritual school and the speculative respectively. So, too, the East-Aryan religion divides into the Indian and the Iranian religions, very different from the outset, but afterwards rendered hostile by the Zarathushtrian reform. And so, lastly, to take but one more example among many, the early Christian, post-apostolic Church is sundered into Eastern and Western Christianity; and the Roman Catholic Church afterwards gives birth to the great Protestant communities, each of these laying stress on some special principle to which that Church had not done justice. We may here also use the figure of a river forking into two or more branches, which then run their separate courses until they empty themselves into the ocean or else reunite. Thus the Indian and Iranian religions remain separate down to the present day, and it is unlikely that they will reunite; while on the other hand we see the two great main streams of the Semitic and the Aryan religious development coalescing in Christianity. We shall, however, in the sequel have an opportunity of explaining this further. It is only after we have done this that we shall be able to inquire by what laws or fixed rules the development of the human mind is governed, and how far they are applicable to religion, in order that, in conclusion, and as the

crown of all, we may try to answer the question — wherein the development of religion essentially consists.

On the route I have thus sketched I hope to be accompanied by your indulgent interest to the end.

LECTURE III.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT—THE LOWEST NATURE-RELIGIONS.

I MUST now endeavour to sketch for you the phases of the development of religion which arise out of one another. Our starting-point is the morphological classification of religions, as attempted by the votaries of their comparative study. It is impossible to ignore it, but we can only attach to it a relative value. Such a classification is attended with great difficulties. That it has generally been a failure, that, for example, classifications like those of Hegel have now become quite useless, was not the fault of the thinkers themselves, whose genius and learning deserve our admiration, but arose from the fact that the data at their command were very imperfect. And even now that new discoveries in the historic and archæological domains have succeeded and even superseded each other so rapidly during the last few decades, thus greatly extending our knowledge — now that various

important religions of antiquity, about which nothing was formerly known beyond what classical writers mentioned incidentally, have become familiar to us from the rich literature of the oriental peoples themselves, from the Veda and the Avesta, from texts in cuneiform character and in hieroglyphics—even now it is difficult to guard against arbitrary and fanciful conclusions. The very increase of our knowledge enables us to see clearly how many gaps still remain, and how often we must content ourselves with names and with phenomena, without possessing any clue to their original import and significance. All classifications of religion are thus provisional. Their boundaries cannot be sharply defined. In one religion the doctrine will be found specially developed, while the ritual is backward, in others the reverse will be the case. Some religions belong, in successive periods of their existence, to very different categories of development; and such must of course be ranked with those whose level they reached when in their prime. But it must not be forgotten that the highly civilised religions of the leading nations were not less rude and primitive in the periods of their inception than the cults of the barbarians which they despised as superstitions. What a world-wide difference between the still half-animistic Zeus of Dodona and of Arcadia and the Homeric, at whose frown Olympus trembled, and who invited all the powers in heaven and earth to measure themselves

with him in order to show them that he was stronger than all of them put together! What a difference between the Hêra of Argos, who was little more than a fetish, and the goddess full of majesty, worthily chosen to be the consort of the greatest of the gods, to be united with him in chaste though not always peaceful marriage! What a gulf between the rude boorish religion of the ancient Romans and the worship of Jupiter O. M. Capitolinus, to whose temple the noble Scipio Africanus went up every morning in order to prepare himself for his daily tasks, and who for a long period beheld the whole civilised world at his feet! And, on the other hand, how many religions are there whose history is hidden from us, which we know in their period of decline only and therefore rank as among the least developed, but which perhaps once occupied a far higher level?

We must therefore be modest and cautious in our classification, and avoid systematising too rigidly. It is not, however, impossible to discover certain types which show different degrees of development. There will at once occur to the attentive observer the two distinctly different main types alluded to in my first lecture. I mean those described by Whitney as unconsciously growing, and distinguished by him from those instituted by individual founders, which are not materially different from those called naturalistic and supra-naturalistic by the well-known German phil-

osopher Ed. von Hartmann, and which I prefer to characterise as the nature-religions and the ethical religions.[1] Although the Master of Balliol (Professor Edward Caird, formerly of the University of Glasgow), in his admirable Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of St Andrews, has selected the more abstract philosophical terms "objective" and "subjective," he indicates in the main the same two categories. He adds, however, a third stage of development, in which the objective and subjective are combined, and of which he makes Christianity the sole representative. But if I understand him aright, the idea which has been called too good to be true—the conception of God as the Being who is at once the source, the sustaining power, and the goal of our spiritual life, as Him "in whom we live and move and have our being," who dwells in the ocean, the sun, and the air, and even in the spirit of man—forms, indeed, the foundation of Christianity, but is only now beginning to realise itself in that religion as the only one possible for the modern world. This is one of the subtle observations, so suggestive, so profitable for further investigation, in which his book abounds. We cannot discuss it further at present, but must do so afterwards. We shall then see whether, in accordance with this idea, there is any ground for adding a third type to the two main types into which all the historical and the existing religions

[1] 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' art. "Religions."

are divided—a type which, potentially but only latently present in Christianity, forms the embryo of the religion of the future. Suffice it meanwhile to note that, while making this suggestion, Professor Caird does not seriously dispute the classification of the historical and still existing religions under two leading types. Nor do we feel constrained to give up our classification in favour of one proposed by Professor von Siebeck in his 'Lehrbuch der Religionsphilosophie' a few years ago. He tries to distinguish several religions which we class among the nature-religions, and even one which certainly belongs to the category of religions founded by means of a reform, or ethical religions, from both of the main types, and he calls them "morality-religions." But he himself makes a number of reservations: the Deity in this class still remains in the service of the world; monotheism is intermediate, because fancy is still allowed undue scope; the mythical still prevails over the ethical, and the mythical development of the evil spirits impairs the dignity and power of the good. In a word, as he himself describes them, they are just those semi-ethical nature-religions which we deem them to be; and he admits that the whole class forms a transitional stage only (*Uebergangsgebilde*). In fact, his classification is closely bound up with his conception of religion as "world-negation" (*Weltverneinung*), which is really applicable to one set of religions only, and with which on the whole I cannot agree.

It is one of the most certain facts established by historical investigation that there is nowhere in the whole history of the development of religion so distinct a cleavage, so sharp a demarcation, as between what we have called the nature and the ethical religions. In the case of the latter we feel at once that there has been a new departure, that an entirely new order of things supersedes the old. Wherever one nature-religion or one ethical religion (as we shall meanwhile continue to call them) merges in another of like kind, the transition is generally gradual, sometimes hardly perceptible, and only noticeable in the later development, or at all events it is not the result of a violent change. But the substitution of ethical religions for nature-religions is, as a rule, the result of a revolution, or at least of an intentional reform. Yet the former have undoubtedly developed out of the latter. They have long, in embryonic condition, slumbered in the bosom of the nature-religions, where they have gradually matured before they saw the light; but their birth comes as a surprise, a catastrophe. And as soon as they come into existence they assume an attitude of opposition to the prevailing religion. They sometimes try to disguise this from themselves and from others, and honestly think that they are merely restoring the ancient faith, or reviving some truth, once confessed, but misunderstood and forgotten. This may be partly the case, but in part they are new

and unheard-of. Nor is the existing religion misled. She feels that her life is at stake, that it is a struggle for existence, that if the new religion gains the day she will have to quit the field; and she therefore obstinately opposes her rival, persecutes its adherents, and strives by violent measures, and with the aid of the State, or of the populace, or of both together, to strangle it in its birth. Conversely, if she fails, and the ethical religion has triumphed, the latter in her turn becomes the persecutor; she jealously guards against any revival of the worship of the powers of nature, which in her view have become evil demons; and if she cannot abolish them without losing her hold over the people, or seeing her influence diminish, she tries to transform the powers of darkness into angels of light. No doubt, even where new tendencies show themselves within the pale of ethical religions, the same strife, the same bloody persecution, often takes place; but this is only an after-result of the first war, for the real conflict is always between the ethical and the naturalistic principles. Historical examples abound. Let me remind you how the Zarathushtrian prophets complained of being persecuted by the Daêva worshippers, and then, after their own triumph, strove to exterminate them; how Mosaism fought against the gods of Canaan; how He who came with a message of peace was yet well aware that He brought not peace but a sword.

Most investigators therefore agree, their differences

being more apparent than real, in recognising the two main forms of religious development, if we may judge from the different names they give them; but when it comes to be a question of characterising them, their opinions differ widely. As to the first form they are pretty well agreed. Whether we speak of religions as "the unconscious growth of generations," or of naturalistic or nature-religions, it comes to much the same thing. But in defining the second form of religions the authorities differ considerably, though not perhaps so seriously as it would appear. Von Hartmann calls them supra-naturalistic, in simple contradistinction to the naturalistic, and fairly enough, inasmuch as the gods at this stage are really elevated above nature. But the term has long been used by theologians in a somewhat different sense, and is therefore unsatisfactory, as it may lead to misunderstanding. Moreover, in my opinion, it is not applicable to all the higher religions, such as the pantheistic and akosmistic systems of India. Nor does the term "subjective," in opposition to "objective," seem to me sufficiently clear and distinctive, and besides it is too abstractly philosophical. Siebeck calls the highest religions "religions of redemption." But in the narrower sense this designation applies only to the Indian religions and to the special Pauline form of Christianity. Moreover, there is a world-wide difference between the Brahmanic and Buddhistic *moksha*, with its various synonyms,

which puts an end to "rebirth's circling stream," and the Pauline apolytrôsis, which is a redemption from sin. If, on the other hand, we take the word redemption in its general sense of "release from the bonds and miseries of the finite, intellectual, and ethical as well as physical," this is not the aim of one class or type of religion only, but is common to all. The word therefore expresses either too little or too much.

I have long been in the habit of calling the second type of religions the ethical, and, after having repeatedly tested the term by the facts and maturely reconsidered it, I propose to adhere to it. We cannot express everything that distinguishes one group of phenomena, or one step of development, from others in a single word. If we attempted to do so we should have to use some lengthy and awkward periphrasis. Thus the religions in question are often characterised by a spiritualism exaggerated to one-sidedness, so that they might fairly enough be called spiritualistic. With still better reason they might be named religions of revelation, for although the nature-gods also reveal themselves in different ways, and make their will known by word and sign, the idea only attains full clearness and maturity in the ethical religions; for in these an appeal is made for the first time to a special revelation vouchsafed by the Divinity once for all, communicated to man by a divine ambassador, recorded in sacred writ, and thus made the foundation on which the whole religion rests.

Spiritual-ethical religions of revelation would thus be the complete name for this category. But their chief and most characteristic element is always the ethical. They have all sprung from an ethical awakening. A more or less lofty ethical ideal is the aim they all have in view, an ideal far removed from the existing world, but which will be attained in the distant future, either on earth or with God in heaven, as it once became flesh, and lived in him who revealed it to man. And the moral laws are now no longer placed merely side by side with religion, as if one could quite well be religious without them, but they are inseparably bound up with it; they are the laws of God Himself, obedience to which He rewards and the violation of which He punishes, and, from a higher point of view, the neglect of which is a rupture of communion with Him, because they are not arbitrarily imposed by Him, but are an emanation of His very nature. Or, to express the matter in more abstract philosophical form, the subjective moral ideal is objectivised in, or projected into, the conception of God. We shall therefore continue to call this type of religions the Ethical, a term which best expresses their leading characteristic.

Having thus defined the two main categories, to one or other of which all the historical and the still existing religions belong, we must now inquire how each of these categories may be further subdivided. It need hardly be said that among nature-religions, and also

among ethical religions, there are always differences, and sometimes great differences, in their state of development. The religions of the Negroes and Redskins are just as much nature-religions as the Babylonian, the Vedic, and the Greek; yet what an immeasurable distance there is between the first and the last of these! The same, though in less measure, may be said of the ethical religions. A complete description of all the variations would be out of place here, and perhaps in the present state of our study it would be rash and hazardous. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the leading examples.

The lowest Nature-Religions known to us correspond to the needs of the childhood of humanity, as that period is presented to us by the latest anthropological research. If we call them animistic, to use the common term, it is not because we regard Animism as a religion, but solely because religion, like the whole life of primitive man, is dominated by Animism. Animism —and I cannot speak of it without mentioning the name of the author who first threw clear light on the subject, I mean Dr E. B. Tylor, Professor in the University of Oxford—Animism is really a kind of childish philosophy which seeks to explain all the phenomena in and around man. Professor von Siebeck describes it accurately, though rather abstractly, as a primitive mythicising, springing from a primitive use of the intellect, which tries to discover in nature all kinds of

useful causal relations; and he does not discern in this the sole source of the most elementary religious conceptions, but believes that certain emotions produced by observing the phenomena of nature also contributed to their formation. In less philosophical but more intelligible form, I would describe Animism as a belief that everything that lives, as well as what primitive man regards as living because it moves, or because he thinks that a certain power emanates from it, is animated by a thinking, feeling, willing spirit, differing from the human in degree and power only. He naturally ascribes such a spirit or soul, such an *anima*, only to objects from which he receives an impression—to the beast of prey, which he fears, but whose strength and agility he admires because superior to his own; to the domestic animal that serves him; to the tree whose fruit revives him, whose shade refreshes him, and in whose rustling foliage he hears the voices of spirits; to the rushing brook, and to the immeasurable, roaring, menacing ocean; to the lofty mountain which arrests the beneficent rain-clouds, and whose mysteries inspire him with awe; to the luminaries and all the phenomena of the heavens, especially those that move, in particular the moon, that great enchantress who ever changes her form; most of all, perhaps, to the spectacle of a storm, when the gale sweeps away and destroys everything before it, when the voice of the thunder terrifies him and the lightning-flash threatens to kill him; and lastly

even to the falling stone, to the leaf shaken by the wind—to everything, in short, which seems to him strange and striking, and which he associates with any event in his own life, and especially with any danger or disaster that threatens or overtakes him. Will he worship them, will he enter into relations with them like that of a servant to a master, or a subject to a prince? That depends on circumstances. Only—for primitive man is as selfish as an untrained child—only when he has any interest in doing so, only when he is satisfied that the object in question is more powerful than he, and that he has something to hope or to fear from it. An anchor is washed up on the African coast. Such an object has never been seen there before. The natives approach it cautiously; but when it lies quiet and hurts nobody, they suspend their judgment and go away. But some freethinker of the kraal has observed that it is made of iron, and as he is just in want of a bit of iron, he ventures to break off a fluke of the anchor. Just as he is busy forging it, an accident happens to him and he dies. And now the matter is clear. In the unknown object dwells a spirit, which has thus avenged the insult offered to it, and henceforth the spirit is propitiated with gifts and sacrifices. So, too, the camel came to be regarded by a Siberian tribe as the small-pox demon, because just when that animal had appeared among them for the first time with a passing caravan the small-pox broke out. And had not

the beast itself two huge lumps on its back? Similarly the horse, introduced into America by Europeans, was regarded by the Mexicans as the image of the thunder-god because they attributed to it the deadly effect of the firearms of the Spanish horsemen. Such examples might be endlessly multiplied.

But this does not imply, or even remotely suggest, that religion arose out of Animism. Hazy philosophers and theologians, whose zeal is only equalled by their ignorance, have imputed to me the view that religion began with the worship of any chance stock or stone. We are convinced, however, that people never began by worshipping stocks or stones or any other visible object, but invariably the spirit or being they believed to be embodied in the object. This is the more certain because, if their prayers are unanswered, or their sacrifices prove fruitless, when their disasters continue and the supposed tutelary spirits thus show themselves powerless, the idol is chastised and cast aside. Idolatry, the adoration and worship of the objects themselves, and not of the spirit supposed to dwell in them, is never the original form of religion; the ignorant many may naturally confound the two things, but this is always an error, a degeneration. The question as to the origin of religion is not of a historical or archæological nature, but is purely psychological, and is quite distinct from the inquiry as to the oldest form of religion. If we

call this form animistic, we by no means imply that religion has sprung from Animism, but merely that its first manifestations are dominated by Animism, that being the form of thought natural to primitive man.

From Animism, as the general form of thought by which all the lower nature-religions are determined, I distinguish, as a special manifestation, a form to which the term is sometimes limited, but which I prefer for the sake of clearness to call Spiritism—a belief that the spirits are not bound to a certain body, but may quit it at pleasure, that they may roam on earth or in the air, "whether of their own motion, or because bewitched by magic and therefore compelled," that they can appear to the living in ethereal-material shape, and that they sometimes take up their abode for a time or permanently in some living or lifeless body other than the one they have quitted. This Spiritism is a higher form of development than Animism. It is the application, according to primitive reasoning, which cannot distinguish between the subjective and the objective, of personal experience to the existing belief that everything has its cause in the will of an indwelling spirit, just as self-conscious as the human spirit—a belief which may be called Polyzoism, to distinguish it from the more developed Spiritism. In his dreams, in his states of ecstasy, sometimes produced by the

use of intoxicants, or in waking visions, although his body remains in the same place, the warrior has gone forth on the war-path, the hunter has secured a rich booty in the happy hunting-fields, the sorcerer or medicine-man has ascended up into heaven or descended into the depths of the earth. Or again his dead relations, heroes of olden time, higher spirits, have themselves appeared and spoken to him, have admonished, punished, comforted, encouraged him. Can he doubt that all this has really happened? Between fancy and reality the primitive man knows no distinction. He can only account for these apparitions by assuming that the spirit temporarily quits the body and leads an independent existence. States of unconsciousness and of apparent death confirm his belief. The soul has then manifestly left the body, although soon to resume its place. And so, when death has actually occurred, he invites—as the Chinese ritual expressly prescribes on the death of the emperor—the departed soul to a speedy return. He assumes that this is always possible, and he therefore furnishes the tombs of his dead with all that they may find needful and comfortable. If he observes that the soul still remains absent, he infers that the spirit of the deceased has entered a higher order of beings, and he then accords to him an adoration, perhaps less frequent, but more fervently religious, than he does to the higher spirits.

I have called Spiritism a higher development of Animism, of which Polyzoism, or what in philosophy is termed Hylozoism, would then be a lower grade. And indeed the formation of such conceptions, fantastic as they seem to us, and as they in practice really are, requires a more advanced thinking faculty than the most primitive races can be credited with. It assumes at least an awakened consciousness of the superiority of the soul to the body and of its relative independence. Animism has been in this form at least a step in advance, and in its own way, and within its own limits, has disclosed a portion of truth to our uncivilised ancestors. Applied to their religious conceptions and observances, Spiritism has in these also been conducive to progress. For by Spiritism the powers which were seen working in the phenomena of nature, in man and beast, which were supposed to dwell in other objects, and which were worshipped as living beings, were severed from their connection with fixed phenomena, and thus raised above them to greater independence. Spiritism has awakened the consciousness that in the adored beings their spirit is the essential thing, the permanent element throughout all their changes; and it has thus paved the way for that religious Spiritualism, which culminates in the beautiful saying that "God is a spirit, and whosoever worships Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." And thus, though in

childlike and unsophisticated form, it has proclaimed a great truth.

This view of Spiritism affords a key for the explanation of the phenomenon which forms its reverse side, and which has been named Fetishism. The origin of the word is well known. When the Portuguese first came in contact with the Negroes, they saw them carrying about certain objects, depositing or hanging them up in sacred places, or collecting them in great huts; and they discovered that the natives ascribed special magic virtue to these objects, and that they expected through their agency blessings of every kind, protection from danger, and, above all, the acquisition of the magic power itself. They therefore called these objects *feitiço*, a word derived from the mediæval Latin *factitius*, "endowed with magic power." In this form the practice is purely Nigritian, and is far from being in vogue among all the other African peoples. Among the southern races it hardly occurs at all. But the term Fetishism has been extended from this Nigritic form to a number of other more or less cognate notions and customs, such as the Polynesian *Taboo*, the American Totemism, the use of amulets, the worship of the images and relics of saints, and, in short, to idolatry in general, to which, however, it has only in part given rise. President de Brosses wrote a work in the last century, called 'Du culte des Dieux fétiches,' which achieved great success, though his conception of the

system rests on an inherent contradiction (*contradictio in terminis*), because the peculiarity of a fetish consists in the fact, not that it is itself a spirit, still less a god, but that it is the temporary or accidental embodiment of a spirit. Professor Fritz Schultze has endeavoured to give the widest extension to the idea by including under it the whole of nature-mythology, and even regarding as fetishes all the phenomena of the firmament—sun, moon, stars, clouds, even mountains, lakes, and rivers—and, in short, everything which primitive man has made an object of adoration. And while some scholars believe Fetishism to be the oldest form of religion, others regard it as nothing but a sad degeneration and aberration of the human mind.

One could almost wish that a term which has given rise to so great confusion of ideas were banished for ever from our science. Let us at least try to keep it within its proper limits. I have called it the reverse side of Spiritism. Observe what I mean by this. When the spirits can choose at pleasure all kinds of objects as their dwellings, it follows that the objects which they are believed to have chosen, which are animated by them and endowed with their power, are not only to be treated with respect, but to be carefully preserved, guarded, and if possible even carried about on the person, in order that the wearer may be sure of their protection wherever he happens to be. Man's longing

to feel near his god, and his god near him, is common to all living religions. The primitive man, however, desires a tangible proof of this. In his Fetishism, Totemism, or other cognate system, is thus disclosed, according to his stage of development, a longing of the religious soul which deserves our respect. It cannot, of course, be denied, and all who know mankind will expect, that this use may be attended with abuse, as indeed even the most sacred things are liable to be abused, and that the system has often degenerated into childish, silly, and even revolting superstition. Yet, in itself and originally, it is not a degeneration, but a necessary transitional phase, in the growth of religion. If, on the one hand, it has led to revolting idolatry, there has, on the other, been elicited from it, by poetry and the fine arts, a rich symbolism which forms an important element in the language of religion, and which is not even confined to that sphere. Your Union-Jack and our Tricolour are looked upon by the Negroes as sacred fetishes. And so they are in the noblest sense. They are emblems of our nationality and independence; in distant regions they are visible reminders of our country; and we are ready to defend them to the death. In short, the so-called Fetishism is the reverse, and, as we are not yet spirits, but sensuous beings, the necessary corrective of Spiritism; but, seeing that it was called into life by Spiritism, which itself shows considerable progress in develop-

ment, it cannot have been, any more than Spiritism, the earliest form of religion.

If I am now to endeavour to characterise the lower nature-religions, I shall only be able to treat of the second of the classes named. For the first belongs to a prehistoric condition, which we may postulate as probable, but cannot describe. All the present and past religions which have been dominated by Animism, and have been brought to light by anthropological and historical research, must be classed with the spiritistic-fetishistic. Those on a lower level that still sporadically survive have not been sufficiently studied to enable us to speak of them with certainty.

In this phase of religious development the conceptions, or what can only yet with certain reservation be termed the religious doctrine, occur in a fluid condition. This is the period of myth-formation. One myth supersedes the other; they go from mouth to mouth, but still in the form of folk-narratives and proverbs, gradually modified, purposely or unconsciously supplemented, and applied now to one, now to another of the adored beings. Thus they are, for the most part, handed down as a family heritage from generation to generation; but means of defining this tradition and preserving it entire are lacking. Nor was any need of this felt as yet. In none of the nature-religions do we meet with anything like a doctrine to which one must cling as a revealed truth, and even in the highest of

them such doctrines are still in their infancy; nor can they in the least degree be expected at this stage. Nay, we look in vain even for a sacred tradition with definite outlines. The only point in which these primitive peoples seem to have been a little more steadfast was the observance of the ancient customs in vogue in the family or tribe, yet without much nicety or exactitude, and without guarding against the introduction of new or foreign elements.

The beings worshipped are unlimited in number, always liable to increase, and without anything like a fixed order of precedence. Some of course are prominent above others because they represent and protect important interests of their worshippers, because their power is more formidable, their province more extensive, or because they belong to a more eminent family or a more powerful tribe. People even had a vague idea of the unity of this higher order of beings, and used some word to express that idea (as the *Wong* of the Negroes, the *Wakon* or *Huakan* of the Americans, the *Num* or *Yum* of the Ural-Altaians). But the world of spirits is still just as little organised as the primitive peoples themselves. All the spirits, even the highest, are but mighty magicians, mighty through their magic, sometimes beneficent according to their fancy or caprice, but always feared. They cannot yet be called gods, as their personality is still too undefined. Where this, however, seems to be the

case, as with the Finns, the influence of the more developed religion of some neighbouring nation, in this case the Scandinavian, is traceable; or else the religion has already approached the confines of a higher period of development, as in the case of the Mexicans and Peruvians.

As the spirits revered are still magicians, so the manner of their veneration may be described as magical, although prayers, gifts, and sacrifices are not lacking. An attempt is often made to play off another magic power against theirs. People seek the help and alliance of one set in order to prevail over the others. By dancing, music, noise, and shouts they strive to ward off the dreaded powers, and by rich offerings to strengthen and propitiate the protecting ones. To this end they make human sacrifices to the gods of war. The more they reinforce the heavenly army, the better it will be able to secure victory for their tribe and people; and on the same principle they present thank-offerings of prisoners of war, just as they give some distinguished chieftain a numerous retinue of women and servants to bear him company on his journey to the world of spirits. These bloody rites must not be judged by our moral standard. They were not inspired by cruelty or blood-thirstiness, though in later times they were abused. Primitive man feels the terror of death no more than a child. Dying is simply passing into another and

even higher state. Between the world of spirits and that of man there is constant intercourse, and the boundaries are undefined. The intercourse between them is childlike, familiar, and confidential, reminding us of what we sometimes observe in the case of simple, worthy, pious people of our own days. The spiritual beings are more powerful, and therefore must be revered; they are not wiser, for the term is still too high, but more cunning, and therefore people must be cautious in dealing with them, though they do not scruple on occasion to overreach them, as was done by Numa Pompilius in the well-known narrative of Ovid. But of moral loftiness, of holiness, majesty, there is as yet not a trace. People speak of them and to them as if to older and more experienced friends, who are bound to advise and help, provided they receive all that they can claim. They invite them to their common table, spread banquets for them, and prepare a good place for them in their houses; and if they do not obtain the blessings they expected, such as the longed-for rain, then, confounding subject and object, appearance and reality, they fancy that, by disguising themselves so as to personate the mighty spirit, and by imitating his actions, they will bring about the desired result.

The nature-religions which still occupy the mythopœic level may therefore best be defined as unorganised magical polydæmonisms under the domination of Animism.

I should not like to close this discussion without again at least mentioning the question whether all the higher religions have passed through this rudimentary stage of development, a question about which one may have an opinion, but to which history gives no answer. Hitherto anthropologists, mythologists, and of course advocates of the theory of evolution, have pretty generally answered this question in the affirmative. They point to the numerous traces of Animism, and especially of Spiritism, in the mythology and cult of every one of the higher nature-religions, and to ideas and usages which still survive in the ethical religions descended from the natural; and they are of opinion that these facts can only be accounted for by assuming that they originated in an earlier phase of the nature-religions. But some recent authors dispute this. They maintain that the cause of the phenomenon mentioned must be sought for in the intercourse and fusion of peoples, whereby animistic fancies and observances crept into religions which had hitherto been entirely free from such superstition. Especially where a primitive and backward people has been subjected by conquest to the domination of a small minority, the latter, in order to enforce their authority, have been obliged to make concessions to the ancient magical rites so dear to their subjects, and to admit such rites to the new religion established by law. This is not impossible; but I con-

fess it seems to me in the highest degree improbable. The survivals of magic Spiritism are much too widely diffused to be explained by absorption or assimilation. Were such the case, we should surely find somewhere in the world some nation or tribe which had resisted these pernicious influences and had guarded its religion against the invasion of all foreign elements. And above all it would require to be shown how the confusion of imagination and reality, of subject and object, came so generally to affect people who knew perfectly well the distinction between them, and how, not in a particular case or by a mere coincidence, but almost universally, people came to adopt ideas and practices which must have seemed to them crude and senseless, out of accord with their system, and out of all harmony with their spiritual wants. I therefore await more cogent reasons before abandoning my opinion that the whole of mankind, as well as every individual man, must have passed through the stage of childhood.

Be this as it may, it is a fact that in the animistic nature-religions all the forms of worship which recur later in the higher nature-religions as constant and permanent elements are already present in embryo. The whole mythology of polytheism, however much transformed by the poets into poetical narratives (*μῦθοι*, *fabulae*), and reduced by the sacerdotal schools to a theological system, is already involved in the

apparently crude, but sometimes very reasonable, ideas formed by primitive man regarding the powers of nature. This probably affords an explanation, and in some sense a justification, of much that is enigmatical in the god-lore of antiquity, of much in it that has shocked philosophers and moralists, the often strange attributes of some of the gods, their metamorphoses, their endless dissensions, their marriages, love-affairs and intrigues—in short, everything which it is difficult to suppose really ascribed by a people on a high plane of civilisation to the gods they worshipped. And in fact, when attributed to gods, all these things are very strange. But as a primitive description of nature, in which the powers of nature are conceived as willing and thinking beings, but are not yet embodied in human form, the system exactly corresponds with the degree of development attained by the framers of these nature-myths. I do not deny that a number of new myths may have sprung up, mainly born of poetic fancy, subsequently to the ancient period. But I believe such cases to be exceptional, and that further research will prove these apparently new creations to be adaptations of older models and not original. The mythical material was woven up, it was freely used, by poets, sages, and sacerdotal schools, and adapted to their higher and more anthropomorphised gods and to the requirements of a higher civilisation; but the marks of its origin

could not entirely be obliterated. And the root-idea of all mythology—that the causes of everything that affects human life and welfare must be sought for in the agency of indwelling, willing powers, pursuing a fixed purpose, untrammelled by the limitations of the finite world, entirely free in their movements, and endowed with great magical power—this root-idea, at all events, dates from the ancient period.

This applies to cult no less than to doctrine. There we find sacrifices, accompanied by prayers, sacred sayings, and songs, to which magical power is attributed, and the magical observances which form the germ of all the symbolical and dramatic features of the later cult. There, too, we see the ever-burning fire, kindled and purified in accordance with ancient fashion. There already we encounter the belief that, by self-denial, abstinence, and mutilation, and especially by the use of intoxicants, one may attain to the higher life and the greater power of the spirits, and that certain privileged persons had received a special qualification for this. As yet there is no priesthood, but we meet with medicine-men, soothsayers, sorcerers, experts, who are consulted in their respective spheres, and in fact with the whole hierarchy in primitive form. There again, in the form of fetishes and shapeless images, we discern the precursors of the later idols, we see sacred places specially visited by spirits and soon declared inaccessible to the *profanum vulgus*, and we even find secret

societies, the members of which, by greater feats of self-control, dedicate themselves to closer communion with the spirits and become their special favourites.

And further, it is not merely the forms of worship, but the ideas which animate the more developed religions, that we meet with in the earliest period, though as yet in childlike, stammering utterances. The divine omnipotence is as yet a wonder-working power, unlimited by any human incapacity; the divine holiness is unapproachableness; the divine omnipresence is as yet but the power of moving from place to place in the twinkling of an eye. The ordeal and the oath, as conceived by Spiritism, already involve a belief in the gods as vindicators of truth and justice, and the dread of their punishment implies an awakened sense of guilt. The idea that, after all, there exists a certain unity in the countless multitude of spirits, an idea I have already alluded to, shows a glimmering of monotheism. Nor are the two fundamental thoughts of all religious doctrine, the superiority of the world of the gods to that of men, and the inter-relation of both, by any means lacking in these primitive religious forms.

Lastly, we may even discover here the rudiments of true piety. As with children, so with primitive man, his attitude towards the spirits shows a wavering between fear and familiarity, but also hope and trust, though mainly directed towards material blessings, and gratitude, though partly induced by the thought that

he must express it in order not to forfeit the future favour of his gods. These are but the buds, destined in the course of later development to burst into flower and to yield fruit. Yet even here religion possesses the feature characteristic of it, wherever it is a living reality, that of devotion, of adoration, which shrinks from no sacrifice, however burdensome, stanchly defends the adored object, and avenges it when insulted. Let us not therefore overlook the true piety which lurks in these defective, and to us often strange and repellent, forms.

Shall we then, conscious of the superiority of our religion, be ashamed of the humble origins from which it has sprung? Shall we not rather hail this religious disposition as a proof of man's higher origin, as a proof that the finite being partakes of the infinite and the eternal? We might as well be ashamed of having been once helpless children, and of having, all of us, even the mightiest monarch and the greatest genius, only gradually grown up to self-consciousness and rational thought. Nor let us forget that the beginning is not the same thing as the origin. Religion too, like every human phenomenon, is governed by the all-embracing law of development—from the lower to the higher, from the natural to the spiritual. The tree must first be a sapling, and the sapling a seed; but in that seed lurks already embosomed the majestic tree with its wealth of foliage and its treasure of fruit.

LECTURE IV.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT—THE HIGHEST NATURE-RELIGIONS.

HAVING sketched the main features of the lowest nature-religions, let us now proceed to the higher. The period of myth-formation, with its unorganised polydæmonism and its magic rites, still under the domination of Animism, is succeeded by the period we call the mythological, in which an organised polytheism is established; the world of gods, now confined within definite limits, is more and more humanised, and the moral element thus ever more powerfully asserts its claims, without, however, as yet attaining supremacy over nature.

At the outset it is necessary to add a word of explanation to this short description.

We have advanced from myth-formation to mythology. But this does not necessarily imply that at this stage myth-making is entirely at an end.

Now and again a new myth arises, or at all events the old myths are modified, extended, subdivided, or applied to beings altogether different from those to which they once belonged; but the examples of new myths have become very rare, and, as I said in my former lecture, on closer examination they will be found to consist of old material moulded anew. The imagination no longer delights to busy itself with the creation of myths as an explanation of striking phenomena, or of those which affect human welfare—for people now begin to discover other and more rational explanations of them—but rather to transform them into poetical narratives of the world of the gods, or into miraculous traditions and legends of a bygone age of which no historic records survive. An attempt is also now made to interpret them in accordance, not with the original meaning, but with the needs and views of the time, and to build them up into a theogonic and cosmogonic system.

And now polydæmonism becomes polytheism. The difference between a demon, a spirit, and a god is not absolute. All the gods are indeed spirits, but all the spirits are not gods. They do not become so until they have acquired not only a definite name and fixed function, but a specific character, a personality, which clearly distinguishes them from other higher beings created by the poetic imagination or embodied in earthly form by the plastic art. These beings are

now placed at the head of the higher world. The worship of the nature-spirits and of the souls of the deceased is not given up, but rather gains in fervency, and generally represents the emotional element in the cold and formal religion of the State. Even new spirits are now and then created, as Aius Locutius, when a heavenly voice was heard, or Argentinus, when silver coinage was introduced. But now these occupy a lower rank. They are subordinate to the world of the gods, they are their servants, messengers, assistants, retainers. They form the retinue which surrounds the deity of the province of nature to which they belong, the army with which the god of war marches to battle. The souls of the dead have their own king in Yama, or Osiris, or Bel of the lower regions, or Hadês, while the privileged ones are associated with the gods of Light, and heroes who have fallen on the battle-field are feasted in Valhalla by Odhin or received in Folkvang by Freya.

The gods themselves are also now arranged in genealogical and hierarchical order. An aristocracy springs up among them, represented by a chosen band, generally of seven, as with the ancient Aryans, the still united Indo-Iranians, and the Assyrians, or of twelve, as with the Babylonians and the Greeks. Or the highest of them are arranged in triads, as those of Anu, Bel, and Ea, and of Sin, Shamash, and Rammân in Babylon, imitated by the Greeks in their Zeus,

Hadês, and Poseidôn. The Vedic gods afford the best example of such an aristocracy. The seven Adityas are not yet forgotten, but other gods are placed by their side, and partly above them; and it does not seem that Varuṇa, the chief of them, though styled *samráj*, or all-ruler, exercises any real authority over Indra or Agni, the most revered deities of the warriors and the priests. It was only after the Vedic society and religion had extended to the Brahmanic that Brahmâ was placed at the head of all the gods, and was afterwards combined in a triad with Rudra, S'iva, and Vishṇu, the most revered of the national gods. Monarchical polytheism, however, soon becomes the commonest. One god rules as a sovereign over all the rest. He is either the god of the king's residence and seat of government, like Ptah of Memphis and Amun-Râ of Thebes in Egypt, Maruduk of Babylon, or Assur in Assyria, or he is the generally acknowledged god of the people, like Zeus of the Hellenes, or he has both these qualifications, like Jupiter Optimus Maximus Capitolinus. This monarchic polytheism is nowhere so sharply defined as in the Homeric god-world. There Zeus is king of kings, the unlimited autocrat. He cannot indeed resist fate, but fate is really his own will, *Dios aisa, Dios moira.* Apollo, the beloved son, and Athêna, the daughter sprung from his head, the spoiled child, indulged by the father in everything, rank indeed next to him, nearer

even than Hêra, who sometimes conspires against him, and who belongs in fact to an earlier category of gods; but they do not govern with him, they have only to obey, and are hardly more than personifications of his revelation and his mind. Around him, on weighty occasions, he assembles his βουλή, the council of the gods, but they only come to Olympus to hear his will, and they have no voice in the matter. And who does not remember the famous passage at the beginning of the 8th book of the 'Iliad,' where the great Olympian in his wrath challenges all the gods and goddesses to take hold of the golden chain which he lets down from heaven, that he alone may hurl all of them together around Olympus' top, in order to show them that his alone is all power in heaven and earth, which neither man nor god can resist.

Thus the ever-changing crowd of divine beings is succeeded by a well-defined order of gods, who rule over the motley system. And these gods become more and more humanised. We shall soon see that all this took place gradually, and not all at once. But, as this humanising process advanced, the power of the moral element in mythology grew with it. If the gods, though superior to men in might and knowledge, of higher nature and immortal, could no longer be represented otherwise than in human form, thinking, feeling, and acting like men, it was impossible to avoid also attributing to them those moral

qualities which people had learned to appreciate in their fellow-men. This was, however, but a defective and illogical union of the natural with the ethical. Stories are told of the gods, originally powers of nature, which are not very compatible with their functions as vindicators of righteousness, truth, and purity. Rude but harmless nature-myths, transferred from the blind powers of nature to beings held up as human ideals, become repugnant to a more developed sense of morality, and several of the philosophers were not slow to point out the strange inconsistency. And accordingly, so long as the supremacy of the ancient gods lasted, the ethical element could not really triumph, and the religions which continued to worship these gods necessarily remained nature-religions, although closely approaching the confines of the ethical.

This progress also reveals itself in the growing desire to organise and regulate ritual as well as doctrine, or at least to make it more uniform among the same people, and to substitute symbolic or other observances for rites whose sensuousness and barbarity began to shock the awakened moral feeling of the younger generation. How is this progress to be accounted for? If we simply reply that it was a result of the general development of mankind, the answer is correct, but it is too indefinite to throw light on the subject. It is quite true that the general causes which always

and everywhere promote religious development were at work in this case also: such as progress in rational thought, which curbs the unbridled fancy and its wild aberrations; progress in knowledge of nature and mankind, which compels people to abandon some of their too crude notions, and removes to a greater distance the boundaries of the unknown wonderland of the spirits; progress in human self-consciousness, which made the permanent veneration of the lower idols impossible, and led to the ascription of human and particularly of moral qualities to the higher beings. Or, to use a common figure, we might simply say that mankind had passed out of childhood into youth. But the immediate cause is due to great social changes, the formation of ordered states and communities conscious of their unity. The motley spirit-world of the animistic religions, ever liable to change, unregulated and indeed anarchical, could no longer be satisfactory when tribes hitherto independent and mostly hostile had combined to form a great and more or less consolidated league; when states, either under monarchical or other form of government, had been constituted; and when even the idea of national unity coupled with a plurality of state-institutions had come into vogue. People then felt the necessity of introducing order into the superhuman world also, and to figure it as a heavenly state, monarchical, federal, oligarchic, or sometimes even democratic—in so far at least as, according to

some myths, the gods choose and appoint their head, who however then reigns as an unlimited dictator. Above all, the details of the public ritual now require to be regulated by the State, which usurps all authority, that is at first by the sovereign. He, the high priest of the community, like the head of the family in his own house, soon delegated his religious functions to some of his servants, who were thus invested with a certain spiritual authority, and who resented all interference from outsiders. And thus there next arose, out of and above the countless traditions of families and tribes, which were naturally treated rather arbitrarily, the tradition of the greater community, recorded in the songs and narratives of the national poets, treasured up, systematised, and taught by priests and scholars, and utilised by the rulers for the maintenance and justification of their authority. The whole of the mythological period of ordered polytheism is dominated in the religious sphere, and perhaps in others too, by *tradition.*

The transition to this period from the preceding was very gradual. Several of the religions which distinctly belong to the earlier development show an inclination to raise themselves above the defective notions and barbarous institutions of Animism. Thus it is recorded of Netzalcuatl, a Mexican prince of Tezcuco, that he built a temple of nine storeys for the god of gods, the first cause of all, dwelling above the ninth heaven,

a temple in which none of the images or bloody sacrifices so common in Mexico were tolerated. So too we hear of Tupac Yupanqui, the Peruvian Inca, who erected a temple for a god in whom he merged the three highest spirits of his monarchy (Illatici-Viracocha-Pachacamac), on the ground that he could not regard the Sun, the chief national god, as truly the highest, but as a mere servant, as otherwise he would not voluntarily traverse the same path every day. But the peoples over whom they ruled were no more ripe for such reforms than were the subjects of the Emperor Joseph II. for his; and besides there soon came the Spaniards, who with fire and sword, bull-dogs and inquisition, converted the Mexicans and Peruvians to Christianity (of a kind), which made an end of all the higher and lower naturistic speculations.

But what conduced more than these sporadic indications of higher longings to facilitate the transition from polydæmonism to organised polytheism was the fact that, in the most advanced animistic religions, the spirits were already arranged. The form or pattern of this arrangement is the family. For from the first-named period date several families of gods, in which places are assigned to all the principal spirits as children and descendants of a wedded pair. This pair usually consists of the god of Heaven and the goddess of the Earth; though sometimes the heaven is regarded

as feminine and the earth as masculine, as, for example, in Egypt, where the earth-god Seb is wedded to the heaven-goddess Nut. But we must not attach too ideal a significance to this fatherhood of the highest god, or regard it as a glimmering of the Gospel idea of "the adoption of sons" (*υἱοθεσία*) and of a divine sonship, an interpretation which is excluded by the mythical conception of the marriage of the two supreme gods. These are simply the heads of the family of the leading spirits descended from them; and the fact that men, but of course members of the same folk only, are supposed to be, mediately at least, descended from them, is one to which we cannot yet attach any higher ethical importance. Besides this mythical pair there frequently occurs a divine mother or grandmother as sole head of the spirit-world. Perhaps this idea preceded the other. It is at all events certain that it arose out of the matriarchate, a social system in which the woman is the sole head of the household. Both ideas have passed into the polytheistic systems, in which the family of the gods already forms an organised state. As an instance of the one, I need only mention the Egyptian Hathor, and the Ishtar and Ashtarte, so widely diffused in Western Asia, who as the great Mater Deorum of Asia Minor was even carried to Rome, and with whom the Argelian Hêra, the Ephesian Artemis, the great Dêmêter, and other Greek and semi-Greek goddesses show great affinity.

As instances of the other may be named the Egyptian Seb, the earth-god, and Nut, the highest goddess, who were superseded by Râ and Osiris, kings of the gods, and the Vedic Dyaus-pitar and Pṛthivî-matar, thrust entirely into the background by the kings Varuṇa and Indra; and while Zeus, father of gods and men, is himself elevated to the kingship, the somewhat shadowy and but little personified Ouranos and Gaia, Heaven and Earth themselves, become his grandparents, the barbaric gods Kronos and Rhea, belonging to a different system of gods, become his parents, and instead of his proper consort Dionê, he receives the mother-goddess Hêra as his wife. No wonder, as already remarked, that his union with this self-willed Despoina, who had hitherto been wont to reign supreme, was not always a very peaceful one.

A peculiar example of a very gradual transition from these families of gods to the divine polities of organised polytheism is afforded by the religions of the Ural-Altaic peoples, especially that of the Finns, which under Scandinavian-Germanic influence has attained a higher stage than any of the others. We might call these the Patriarchal. The gods are usually called father and mother, grandfather and grandmother, and as a special honour they receive a title which in the native language means "the old ones"—that is, the wise and venerable. The Finnish Pantheon is, in fact, a tribal or family league, under more or less powerful

chiefs, but without the slightest hierarchical order. Though side by side, they are independent of each other, and each has his own domain, over which the others have no jurisdiction. In accordance with the wish he cherishes, or the help he thinks needful, the believer invokes the god of the earth, of the sea, or of the forest; and only when disappointed of succour from the deity from whom it was most expected, he appeals to Ukko, the god of heaven, as the mightiest of all, who is able to help when all others fail:—

> "Ukko, thou, O God of Heaven!
> Ukko, come, thou art invoked!
> Ukko, come, we need thee sorely!"

This invocation occurs frequently in the 'Kalevala,' the epic poems of the Finns. The religions of the Ural-Altaians are indeed still in the animistic stage; their gods are really nothing but sorcerer-spirits, and they act by sorcery. But they lie on the confines of polytheism, confines which the Finns alone, owing to their intercourse with the neighbouring Germanic peoples, have occasionally overstepped.

Closest to the other side of the boundary lie several religions which must be ranked among ordered polytheisms, because, though strongly tinctured with Animism, they are no longer dominated by it. To this class probably belongs the ancient religion of the Chinese empire and that of the "Sumerians," or ancient dwellers

in Babylonia, so many features of which have passed over into the Semitic-Babylonian. But of these we know too little to enable us to speak with certainty. To the same class belong most of the ancient cults of Western Asia with their obscene and barbaric rites and their tree and stone worship, the primitive Hellenic and the primitive Latin, and, highly developed as it was, the Egyptian, with its interminable magic and mysticism, its countless amulets and fetishes, its worship of animals and the souls of the dead, which was nowhere in the civilised world (unless in this last respect among the Chinese) so highly and minutely elaborated.

Within the period of ordered Polytheism there are also two distinct steps of development, the Therianthropic and the Anthropical or semi-ethical. The term Therianthropic—from *thêrion*, animal, and *anthrôpos*, man—is applied to the religions in which the same god is conceived at one time as a man, at another as an animal, but is generally represented in half-animal, half-human form, whether as a man with an animal's head, or as an animal with a human head. The former of these figures prevails in Egypt, the latter in West Asia, but not without exceptions. The animals are either real or mythical, and are sometimes very composite monsters. Living animals may be the representatives of the gods on earth, a pledge of their presence, their embodiment, but they must be very

special examples of their kind, distinguished by certain marks, and supposed to have been born in a supernatural manner. Thus each of the chief Egyptian gods possessed, both within and without his sanctuary, his sacred beast, which was revered as the god himself. To insult or to slay such an animal was the height of sacrilege. When the sacred bull of Hapi at Memphis was wounded by Cambyses and died on the following day, his crime sufficed to impel the Egyptians, who had long groaned under foreign yokes and had lost all energy, to revolt against the Persian domination; and Darius, his successor, who restored that domination, acted with great political wisdom in purchasing at great cost and presenting to the Egyptians a new Hapi to replace one that had died during his reign. In the temples of Western Asia such animals were also kept; but there the animal-images of the gods predominated, these being either entirely in animal form, like the bulls of Ba'al and those of Yahve at Dan and Bethel, or in composite animal and human form, like the Dagon of Ashdod and Gaza. It would be a mistake to regard this animal worship as mere symbolism. It was partly a survival from the ancient period, but so far modified that each animal was associated with a chief god who was worshipped in it, and further that the human form was combined with the distinctive animal's head, or the animal's body with the distinctive human

head. Human self-consciousness was now awakened, but had not yet attained full supremacy. Strange as these forms appear to us, this association with the lower animals was not supposed to degrade the gods, but rather to differentiate them from men, and to indicate their superiority. A primitive mysticism, half unconsciously, strove by these mysterious features, borrowed from animal life, to express the superhuman power of the deity. People feared, indeed, as the Greek historian has expressly related of the Phœnicians, to represent their gods in wholly human form, lest they should thus place them on a level with their worshippers.

This is also the reason why the ethical ideas which were ever advancing towards consciousness could not yet be received into the doctrine. Morality was, however, connected with religion. Moral treatises, which occur in Egypt at a very remote period, appeal to the deity in order to enforce their precepts. In Babylon, too, before religion had there attained its highest development, when people violated the moral law they felt that they were guilty before God. Even in religions of the therianthropic phase the gods are vindicators of righteousness and justice, and men are responsible to them for their actions. But the ethical element is merely placed beside the religious, not incorporated with it. Nor could this be otherwise, because it was as yet regarded as heteronomous, as a

law arbitrarily imposed on men. The gods indeed require this law to be observed, because they must be obeyed; but they may exempt any one they choose, and they are not themselves bound by it. It is an instrument of discipline for man, but they are exalted above any such restraint. Moreover, in man's relationship towards them the same rules do not apply as in his intercourse with his fellow-men. They punish murder and debauchery; yet men, and particularly children, are sacrificed to them; and rites which, but for the sanction of religious tradition, would even then have been condemned as licentious and barbarous, are performed in their honour. These are called, and rightly, religious survivals; they could not, however, have survived but for the fact that men honestly thought that the deity was above the law, that he could require from his worshippers everything that really belonged to him; and that, in order to propitiate him, they must not hesitate to sacrifice to him their dearest possessions, the lives of their children, and the chastity of their daughters. Even in Israel, which had already entered on a higher phase of development, the moral earnestness of the prophets did not avail without the occasional co-operation of the kings to put a stop to those bloody sacrifices of children which prevailed before the great purification effected by the Captivity.

But even the Polytheistic religions do not all stop at this point. In some of them the human element pre-

dominates over the animal, although this supremacy is but gradually attained. Blended animal and human forms of gods descend to the lower rank of servants and subordinate spirits, and sometimes to that of terrible monsters. The animals themselves are now placed by the side of the gods—who are now conceived as purely human, though in power and wisdom superhuman—as their satellites, messengers, and symbols. For the barbaric rites substitutes are now sought. The conflict between light and darkness, life and death, spring and winter, fertility and drought, which formed the subject of the ancient myths, now becomes the triumphant struggle of gods, conceived as ideal immortal men, with overwhelming powers of nature; while these powers, represented as giants, dragons, and monsters, if not torn to pieces like Tiâmat, mother of nature, by Maruduk, leader of the gods, as in the Babylonian cosmogony, are at least fettered and hurled into Tartarus, as the Titans and Giants were by Zeus. And observe that it is not mere physical superiority which enables the gods to triumph. When Tiâmat prepares to defend her sole supremacy against the growing power of the young gods and to annihilate them, the very highest of them decline to enter the lists against her, and even the brave Maruduk, who dares to place himself at the head of the heavenly army, quails for a moment in terror when he is confronted with the monster, with her retinue of snakes,

scorpions, birdmen, and roaring tempests. The Thursas and Jötuns, the Giants of the Scandinavian mythology, are indeed physically stronger than the Asas and Vans, and are skilful sorcerers besides. When the Asas enter upon a contest with them in eating and drinking they get the worst of it. But Thor, although they scoff at his diminutive figure, extorts from them a certain respect by the proofs he gives them of his muscular strength and appetite, although he does not succeed in drinking up the whole ocean, or in hauling up out of the sea the Midhgardh serpent, which encircles the world. But in the end the smaller and weaker beings are victorious owing to their prudence and co-operation, and owing to a certain superiority of spirit, which can be felt rather than seen or explained. For the first time there is revealed in these myths an awakened, but somewhat hazy, consciousness of the superiority of the human mind over nature.

With that consciousness is necessarily coupled, and there is indeed implied in it, a feeling of moral preponderance, which results in an ethical movement ever increasing in importance and power. That the ethical element is now more and more pronounced in religion is manifested in different ways.

It manifests itself, in the first place, in the fact that men now venture to criticise and to repudiate some of the actions imputed to the gods by the myths. This occurs at a very early period. Let me mention a few

examples. In the curious narrative of the flood of the Babylonians, which forms the eleventh book of their Epos, the great Bel of the lower regions, in accord with the sombre character ascribed to him by the Babylonian theology, has executed the judgment decreed by the gods. The whole of mankind must be annihilated, but another chief god, the good-natured creator, whose name is usually spelled Êa in the ancient language, and is perhaps the same as the Assyrian Shalman, the Saviour, has warned a pious worshipper, one of his favourites, of the impending calamity; whereupon the latter with his whole tribe takes refuge in a great covered vessel, and thus preserves the germ of a new humanity. Old Bel is furious when he discovers this. He is not even invited to the sacrifice offered to the gods by the rescued people, after they had left their vessel, which had run aground on Mount Niṣir. The Sun-god, who sees everything, reveals to him how he has been tricked. In his fury he then goes to call Êa to account for his violation of the divine decree, in which he himself had concurred. Êa begins with evasive answers, but soon turns the tables upon him. It is not he, but Bel, who has acted inexcusably. It was an unjust judgment which condemned the good and evil, the pious and impious, alike. And would he still wish to destroy the remnant of humanity? That would be an aggravation of the injustice. Had he not plenty of other means at his disposal, pestilence, famine, war, and wild beasts,

of punishing sinners, but sparing the righteous? Bel allows himself to be convinced; he himself leads forth the rescued ones and grants them his pardon. And thus the sense of justice which rebelled against such indiscriminate punishment was satisfied. In another book of the same Epos, Ishtar, the goddess of Uruk, offers her hand to the hero who had gained a royal crown by delivering his people from the oppression of the Elamites. But he declines the honour, and in a very rude manner. Ishtar belongs to the matriarchal goddesses who choose their own husbands, and keep them only so long as they please. And now her new choice overwhelms her with reproaches for the cruel treatment to which she had subjected her former favourites, a fate to which he did not wish to expose himself. As a matter of course the presumptuous hero pays the penalty of his audacity. The poet could not represent the matter otherwise. A deity, of whatever rank, cannot be insulted with impunity; and Ishtar accordingly retained her place in the Assyrian and Babylonian cult to the end. But the disrespectful speech put by the poem into the mouth of the hero, gives vent to a feeling of moral disgust at the cruelties which at an earlier period, as the mythical attributes of phenomena of nature, had given no offence, but now, when ascribed to a personal deity, at least caused surprise. It is a curious fact that in the Edda the very same reproaches are directed against the Scan-

dinavian Ishtar, and indeed against all the principal Asas, but this time not by a hero or demigod, but by Loki, the *enfant terrible* of the gods, who, however, is also severely punished for his temerity. The ancient Babylonian example proves that it is not absolutely necessary to ascribe this disparaging treatment of the gods to Christian influence, by which some scholars are inclined nowadays to account for a considerable part of the Scandinavian mythology. Similar cases may quite well occur in a nature-religion of a higher stage. Nor do we require to refer to Christian ideas the miserable fate of the god Loki, just mentioned. This leads us to consider another and more striking manifestation of moral feeling in the religion of this period. I have just mentioned that Ishtar, in spite of the wicked part she plays in the Epos, retained her place in the Babylonian and Assyrian worship to the end. The same may be said of the Bel of the lower regions. Thus the service of the Olympian gods did not suffer from the fact that the poets of the 'Iliad' and the 'Odyssey,' which were read by all the Greeks, described their vagaries, their quarrels, their intrigues, and their foibles with a certain approval. Nor was the cult of Hephæstus and Ares, and least of all that of Aphroditê, impaired by the fact that Demodocus, in the 'Odyssey,' hangs up a comic picture of the misdoings of the deities of love and war and of the revenge of the injured husband,

who on another occasion, when he limped about as the cup-bearer of the Olympians, made them burst out into uncontrollable laughter. But such was not always the result. Some of the gods have been deprived of their honour and majesty. Hadês, the sombre god of the lower regions, was still served, but not more than absolutely necessary, and when people passed his temple they averted their faces. The Germanic Loki, once one of the three highest gods, who accompanied the supreme god Odhin in all his expeditions, ever roguish, sometimes bringing the Asa-world to the brink of ruin by his tricks, but managing to save it at the last moment, became an evil spirit, who was shunned by all, and doomed to everlasting torture for his misdeeds. The same thing happened at a much earlier period in the case of the Egyptian god Set. Hateful as was the part played by him, the god of death in the Osiris myth—one of two principal myths of the Egyptian creed, in which he figures as his brother's murderer—yet for many centuries he was no less revered than his brother, and some of the kings of the nineteenth dynasty even delighted to take his name and to delineate his features as the god who "taught their hands to war." But shortly afterwards Set became a dreaded demon, whose name the people erased from the monuments, and whose image they tried to transform into that of some other god. Lastly, the result produced among the

Iranian peoples by a great reform—namely, that the Daêvas, the beings once revered as heavenly gods of light, were banished to the kingdom of darkness as lying spirits and devils—occurred in India in the case of the Asuras. In the Veda the name of Asura is the highest title of the chief gods, and in the form of Ahura it continued to be the title of the one supreme god in the system of Zarathushtra. But even within the Vedic period the word is frequently applied to certain evil magical spirits; and the Asuras afterwards become the crafty and dangerous enemies of the Daêvas, who are no longer worshipped, but abhorred.

But this purification of the world of the gods, and this incidental criticism of their acts, were insufficient to satisfy the growing demands of moral feeling. An attempt was now made to meet these demands by giving the nature-myths an ethical significance, or even by modifying them according to ethical principles. The former attempt was made at a very early period, as is proved by the myths of Hêraklês and Promêtheus among many others. Both of these are very ancient gods, although one of them descended to the rank of the heroes or so-called demigods. The other was ranked among the Titans. Yet both, and particularly Hêraklês, were very generally worshipped as gods, and being considered the greatest benefactors of the human race, they were more beloved than many

of the other gods. The Hêraklês myth is one of the richest in the rich Greek mythology. It would require quite a series of lectures to discuss it, and even a short survey would encroach too much upon our allotted time. I shall therefore confine myself to the chief points, and only found upon what is commonly accepted. Hêraklês is generally considered to be an ancient god of the sun, or hero of the sun, serving willingly or unwillingly, who like Io, the melancholy wandering goddess of the moon, is hated and persecuted by Hêra, the jealous queen of heaven; but after a life of incessant strife and suffering, toil and humiliation, for the benefit of mankind, he is received into the sphere of the Olympians by Zeus the god of heaven, as the most beloved of his sons. Such is no doubt the story of Hêraklês according to classical mythology, but I believe it took shape under the influence of certain oriental gods and their myths. The original Hellenic god was of a different character, more nearly resembling the Thor-Donar, the Germanic god of thunder. But we need not discuss this point further. It is admitted on all hands that the ancient indigenous Hêraklês myths were characterised by barbaric rudeness. This divine hero is usually a wrestler and a boxer, and he is therefore the patron of athletes and the founder of the Olympian games. His favourite weapon is the club. He is a genuine Jötun or Thursa, even surpassing the Centaurs as an eater and drinker,

and a veritable Berserker besides, destroying everything in his fits of fury, and even slaying his own children. As the god of fertility he is the special patron of the husbandman, the vine-grower, and the herdsman, in which capacity he also resembles Thor. Of his prodigious physical strength and of his exuberant animal spirits the most incredible stories are told. In short, he is an ideal of bodily strength and gigantic power, the ideal of a young half-civilised people, to whom they looked up as an averter of disasters (Alexikakos), and as the conqueror (Kallinikos) of all the monsters and hostile beings, conceived as embodiments of the dreaded powers of nature. What, then, did the religious needs of later generations, when manners were softened and higher civilisation demanded other ideals, make of this rude fighter? What did the ethical speculations of philosophers and theologians make of him, especially after his personality and his myth had been enriched under the influence of foreign elements? The theologians taught that he had to suffer all these things and to accomplish all his toilsome tasks in order to expiate his heinous guilt, and that he was not received into the sphere of the gods until he had triumphantly overcome all his trials. The philosophers make him a noble Sufferer, who voluntarily, from love to man, took upon him his heavy yoke, and when a youth, standing at the crossways where Virtue invited him

to follow her, and Pleasure enticed him, unhesitatingly chose the former path: a moral ideal of Cynics and Stoics alike, and in whose name a widely diffused fraternity of devotees was founded. And the sculptors too, while adhering to his ancient type as a muscular combatant, girded with a lion's skin and leaning on his club, throw an expression of profound melancholy into his features, characteristic of the suffering hero.

The myth of Promêtheus is also obviously an ancient nature-myth, that of the theft of fire, common to all the Aryans, and perhaps to other peoples also, while he himself is the god of the domestic and sacrificial fire, closely associated with Hephæstus, the great god of the fire of the mechanical arts, and with the lightning goddess Athêna, born from the head of Zeus. The mythologists did not at first regard him with favour. He is an arrant robber, a crafty rogue (*ἀγκυλομήτης*), who is ever attempting to trick the great god Zeus, ever opposing him in his presumptuousness, and even seeking to equal him. According to Hesiod he has not even conferred a boon on humanity with his fatal gift, and it therefore only serves him right to be chained to a pillar, with an eagle devouring his liver, which grows anew every night, and to undergo this unendurable torment until Hêraklês succeeds in procuring his pardon and release. But Æschylus tells quite a different story. He represents Promêtheus as

one of the benefactors of the human race, to whom men are indebted for their dominion over nature and the blessings of a higher civilisation. Although the poet is a sincere believer, who regards Zeus as the greatest and mightiest god, and also as the wise sovereign, he is in full sympathy with the bold Titan, who from self-sacrificing love to mankind dares to withstand the supreme ruler; and he lovingly delineates him as a model of nobility and loftiness of character. The fearful suffering to which he is condemned is rather the tragic fate of one who has dared to try conclusions with a superior power for the salvation of others, than the merited penalty of a wicked man; and the fettered hero consoles himself with the thought that even the sovereignty of Zeus will one day have an end. We may be surprised that the poet did not perceive the inconsistency between his sympathetic portraiture of the rebellious Titan and his belief in the goodness and justice of the father of gods and men; yet we cannot deny that in his striking creation he reveals a noble human self-consciousness and a pure and lofty moral sentiment.

The poets do not, however, rest satisfied with putting an ethical construction on nature-myths. They go a step further. They take great liberties with the myths themselves, and modify them in accordance with their ethical principles. Each of them does this in his own way. Pindar suppresses the objectionable fea-

tures of the myths, or strives to save the honour of the gods by explaining them on rational grounds. He cannot credit the myth that Tantalus served up his son to the gods, and that at least one of them partook of it; it was Poseidôn who had carried off the youth and thrown the blame on the father. Sometimes he entirely rejects the tradition, in order that he may not be obliged to admit that the gods quarrelled with each other. Æschylus, as we have seen, carries his hearers into the heart of the myth, reveals to them its moral earnestness, and reconciles it as far as possible with the wants of his age. Sophoklês, the most ethical of the three (ἠθικώτατος), adheres more faithfully to the form of the myths, but humanises them. His heroes are more human than those of Æschylus, and expiate the guilt they had unwittingly incurred, like Œdipus, or that of others, like Antigonê, by voluntary suffering rather than disobey the unwritten but eternal and immutable laws of Zeus, which no one may violate at the behest of their fellow-men. Euripidês, unduly depreciated of late by German critics, but defended by men like Mahaffy, Symonds, and Robert Browning, may have been inferior to the two other great tragedians as a dramatist, but he surpassed them as a philosophical thinker. We do not find in him the serene harmony of Sophoklês, but conflict, a constant struggle with doubts which he cannot always silence. Between his thought and his art—for tragedy had a

religious character, and doubtless required to conform to the popular creed — there was a gulf which he could not bridge over, and from which he shrank. Too enlightened to acquiesce in tradition, he was too religious to rest satisfied with its disavowal; and sometimes his religious sentiment gets the better of him, as when he describes the fate of Pentheus, who was doomed to perish because, in spite of the divine tokens, he refused to honour Dionysus. The case of Euripidês shows better than any other how the more enlightened, without perhaps being fully conscious of it, had grown out of the worship of the nature-religions, and how they tried to reconcile it with their philosophical and ethical convictions, though not with entire success.

But they could not go so far as the philosophers. When philosophers spoke of a god, the greatest among gods and men, unlike mortals, either in form or in spirit, such doctrine could neither be tolerated by the official representatives of religion, nor approved by believers like Pindar. According to him, men are infinitely inferior to the gods, at the mercy of fate, ignorant of their future; yet "one is the race of men and one of gods, and from one mother we both draw our breath." Exalted above old age, sickness, and death, blessed and almighty, the gods are nevertheless not wholly unlike men in origin, bodily form, and mental powers.

And from their point of view these poets and believers were right. Had they abandoned their creed they would have sacrificed one of the indispensable elements of religion—the belief in the inter-relation that subsists between God and man, notwithstanding the infinite superiority of God.

And accordingly the attempt to elevate the higher nature-religions to the rank of ethical religions by a process of gradual development did not succeed. These nature-religions had reached the extreme boundary; yet they remained semi-ethical only, and destitute of any harmonious union of the ethical and the natural elements, a union only to be approached after a long course of development. Thus far the conception of God had been purified, elevated, and spiritualised as far as was possible. Other nations had anticipated the Greeks in this. Sometimes we find the Theban prophets extolling their Amun-Râ, or the Babylonian royal scribes their Bel-Maruduk, in language which the Hebrew prophets would not have disdained to apply to the Holy One of Israel. Throughout the penitential psalms of Babylon breathes a deep sense of guilt. Words full of consolation are addressed to the last of the great monarchs of Ashur: "Thy sins, O Ashurbanipal! like the waves of the sea, shall be obliterated; like the vapours on the face of the earth, they shall melt away before thy feet!" The highest of the gods are neither created nor born,

but have created themselves (*banû ramnishu, khoper t'esef*). Such was the doctrine taught on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and such on the banks of the Nile. How the Greeks strove to unite in Zeus all the attributes of the Almighty, all-wise, and good governor of the world—what they made of Apollo, the god of light, in whom are combined the highest qualities of great genius, artistic inspiration, wisdom, self-knowledge, and genuine humanity, and who had become the revealer of the divine will, the atoner of guilt, and the inspirer of the higher life—how the ancient nature-goddess Athêna, whom we find already transferred by Homer from the domain of nature to that of spiritual life, became the Parthenos, the virgin goddess, ever acting with prudence in war and peace, patroness of science and art, representative of the rich Hellenic civilisation, which culminated at Athens, and of the spiritual light which radiated thence throughout the whole world, and was not even extinguished by the downfall of the ancient Greek people—all this is too well known to require more than a single word to recall it. But all this was unavailing. The gods were still too much of nature-gods; their service was still too reminiscent of the phenomena and powers of nature of which they had once been personifications; they were, above all, too heavily weighted with myths which no longer suited the higher ethical stage now reached, ever to

become pure ethical deities. In order that a nature-religion may give birth to an ethical, a reform is necessary; and this reform must not only substitute a spiritual, ethical, personal god for the nature-gods, but must resolutely break with the old forms, retaining only as many of them as are consistent with the higher principles upon which it is founded. How such religions come into existence, and how they develop, I shall endeavour to indicate in the following lecture.

LECTURE V.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT—THE ETHICAL RELIGIONS.

We shall now proceed to discuss the most highly developed religions, those we have called the ethical-spiritualistic revelation-religions, or more briefly the *ethical* religions, on the grounds already explained. I call them *spiritualistic* because they are sometimes characterised by spiritualism carried to an extreme; *revelation*-religions because the idea of revelation has now attained perfect clearness and maturity, and because a special revelation vouchsafed by the deity once for all, and recorded in sacred writ, forms the foundation on which the religion rests; but, above all, *ethical*, because, arising out of an ethical awakening, they aim at a more or less lofty ethical ideal, an ideal no longer merely co-ordinated with religion, but conceived as God's own will, and an emanation of His being—or in more abstract philosophical language, an ideal objectivised in, and projected into

the conception of God. I have also had occasion to point out that the transition from the nature-religions to the ethical does not proceed so regularly as the transition from the lower to the higher nature-religions, or from the animistic-polydæmonistic to the ordered polytheistic, but is invariably accomplished by means of a designed reformation, or sometimes even by a revolution. All this must now be further explained and illustrated.

Let us first say a word about the religions which may be considered to have attained this pitch of development. About some of them there can be no doubt. I need only mention Judaism, sprung from the Mosaic community, founded upon the sacred Thora, the law revealed to Moses by God himself, and upon the preaching of the inspired prophets; or the Brahmanic community with its Veda as a book of revelation, comprising the whole divine science of redemption, infinite and eternal, not imagined, but actually seen by the ancient bards; or Confucianism, which reveres Kong-tse, the great sage of China, as its founder, and possesses its sacred writ in the five Kings, or canonical books, and the four Shu, or classical books, of which the last-named emanated from the school of Kong; or Islâm with its Ḳorân, recording the revelations made by Allah to Mohammed, greatest of all his prophets; or various other religious communities which sprang up in later ages, chiefly in

India and Persia, and which cannot exactly be identified with Brahmanism, Buddhism, or Mohammedanism, although founded partly on one of these religions and partly on Christianity. The question whether Taoism, the other great Chinese religion, can be deemed an ethical religion has yet to undergo an investigation for which I do not consider myself qualified; but judging from its historical development I suspect that it has no such claim. For, although it appeals to Lao-tse, the other great Chinese sage, an older contemporary of Kong, and highly revered but not followed by the latter, and to his Tao-te-King, the book of the Way and the Virtue, as a sacred writ, I fear that it can just as little claim such a title as it is possible to find relationship between the silly superstitions and dreary magic arts in which it delights, and the gloomy but profound speculations of the master. On the other hand, the religion of Zarathushtra, which prevailed in the Iranian lands during the ancient Persian domination of the Achæmenides, in the Parthian kingdom of the Arsacides, and the mediæval Persian dominion of the Sâsânides, certainly belongs, in my opinion, to the ethical religions; and it is a mystery to me how Professor von Siebeck can rank it among the higher nature-religions, which he terms morality-religions. None of the characteristics of a spiritualistic-ethical revelation-religion are lacking here. Although it is a moot-point whether Zarathushtra was a his-

torical or a mythical personage—and there are high authorities on the subject of Iranian antiquity and historians of repute who maintain the former—it is certain that, although he belongs to a legendary period and is extolled as a supernatural being, he constitutes the concrete summary, or the eponym, of a definite reformation effected by the promulgation of a new and systematic doctrine. This doctrine, at once religious and social, was essentially ethical. For the roving life of predatory hordes there was now to be substituted the settled life of husbandmen and herdsmen; the Daêva worship of the former was to be succeeded by that of higher beings, who, no longer as nature-gods, ruled over nature, and who demanded, hallowed, and protected purity, vigilance, and industry. These beings, as I have already indicated, who were at first little more than shadowy personifications of abstract ideas, were regarded as the vassals and servants of a real god, the all-wise Lord, Ahura Mazda, neither born nor created like them, and far exalted above them. If, at a later period, when the new religion had spread among tribes and classes which clung to their ancestral cult, several of the antiquated gods and rituals were revived, they were subordinated to Ahura Mazda, or transformed from gods into Zarathushtrian Yazatas, while their service was conformed with the orthodox doctrine. Many a Christian, a Buddhist, and Mohammedan saint owes his origin to a similar process. The

ancient worship of Fire was maintained, but now on the ground that it was of heavenly origin, and truly the spirit of Ahura Mazda himself. Nor was a sacred writ lacking. The Avesta, which we still possess, contains the sadly meagre, but in part the earliest fragments of a religious literature which, according to both indigenous and Greek tradition, was of great extent, and, as being the record of divine revelation, was preserved by order of government in two authentic copies, but was lost when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great. To this day, among the Parsees of India and the inhabitants of several districts of Persia, who compare favourably with other Orientals in industry, honesty, and cleanliness, the Zarathushtrian religion still survives, bearing venerable testimony to one of the noblest religious-ethical movements recorded by ancient history.

You are perhaps surprised that I have not yet mentioned the two greatest religions in the world, and the most widely diffused of all — Buddhism and Christianity. What position is to be assigned to these two in the classification is a matter of keen controversy. Professor Whitney had no hesitation on the subject. He naturally placed them in the category of "religions proceeding from an individual founder," or practically the same class which I prefer to call ethical. "Of this origin," he says, "are Zoroastrism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism; and from the point of view of the general

historian of religions, whatever difference of character and authority he may recognise in its founder, Christianity belongs in the same class with them, as being an individual and universal religion, growing out of one that was limited to a race."[1]

I quote his words advisedly, as they exactly indicate the attitude that our science must take towards our own religion. We are only concerned for the present with the morphological classification of religions, and not with the question as to which of them in our judgment best satisfies man's needs, or which is the most excellent, or which is the only true religion. If therefore we place Christianity as a form of religion among the most highly developed ethical religions, it will be on purely scientific grounds. And if we place it in the same category as others, such as Buddhism, we by no means imply that it is of equal religious value. For the present we leave this point undetermined; but to prevent misunderstanding we had to explain it.

It is obvious to every one that there is a material difference between these two religions and the other ethical religions. Most religions limit themselves to a particular people or nationality, and if they spread and are accepted by other nations, it is as part and parcel of the civilisation to which they belong; but these two alone address themselves, not to a single

[1] Princeton Review, 1881, p. 451.

people, but to all men and to every nation in its own language. Judaism, for example, admitted, from other nations, proselytes who either obeyed some of its behests or fulfilled its whole law of righteousness; but it never accounted even the latter as equal in rank to the born children of Abraham. But the Buddha says, "My law is a law of redemption for all;" and Christ exclaims, "One is your Father, and ye are all brethren!" I am aware that many at first must have taken offence when they saw that even Chandâlas, who belonged to no particular caste, and contact with whom polluted a member of the Brahmanic community, were admitted to the Buddhistic; and it is well known that many of the Jewish Christians looked askance at the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and refused to eat with Gentile Christians. Yet both religions contained the same great principle from the first. In short, Buddhism as well as Christianity are universalistic in character, while all the other ethical religions are in the main particularistic. Of these Mohammedanism is the least particularistic. This religion also extends to all nationalities, and makes no distinction between Arabian believers and converts of other nations. But its sacred language, its obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, and its minutely detailed legal ceremonial, render it far more particularistic than either Buddhism or Christianity, to which it is inferior in other respects also. Born of a com-

bination of Judaism with an ill-understood and degenerate Christianity, and grafted on the Arabian religion at a time when the highest religious development was making itself felt, it was in fact compelled, if it would vie with Christianity, to adopt the form of a universalistic religion; but it remained much more Semitic and even Arabic than Buddhism was Aryan or Indian; while it entirely lacks the general human element of Christianity and its marvellous adaptability to the most divergent of human needs. Professor von Siebeck has therefore called Islâm a *Rückbildung*, a decline to a lower plane; and when I formerly classed it with Buddhism and Christianity among the so-called World-religions, several scholars protested. And I admit that there is a material difference between Islâm and these two great religions, inasmuch as Islâm did not spontaneously produce the universalistic principle as a necessary corollary of its fundamental conceptions, but borrowed it from Christianity, and accepted it in a political more than in a religious sense. In fact the universalism of Islâm differs little from, and is but an extension of, the proselytism of Judaism. It is a world-religion in the same sense as we speak of a world-monarchy, a religion essentially national and in so far particularistic, yet striving to subjugate the world and to substitute Mecca for Jerusalem as its religious capital.

Further study and reflection, however, have led me

to take a somewhat different view of this subject, especially as regards Buddhism and Christianity, from that which I formerly held in common with others. Have we not, by ranking these two religions with the other ethical religions, though on a higher platform, unwittingly co-ordinated what is really heterogeneous? Can we—and this is the chief question—call them religions in the same sense as the Jewish, the Parsee, or any other? It is not on the ground that Buddhism might originally be called atheistic, and therefore not a religion at all, that I ask this question: because, in the view of the Buddhist community at all events, the Buddha himself, whether as the glorified S'âkya Muni, or as Adi-Buddha exalted above him, and attended by a retinue of other Buddhas, was regarded as the deity. And in any case the difficulty does not apply to Christianity. But the one religion as well as the other is rather an abstraction than an actual organisation, not a special religion, but rather a group or family of religions, one in origin and some general principles, but otherwise totally different and even antagonistic — a group or family in the same general sense as is meant by the Aryan and the Semitic, but differing from these in this particular that they are conscious of that common origin and general affinity of principle because they arose within, while the others arose before, the historic period. Each of these groups worships the same Lord, but the mode of His wor-

ship and the conception of His person are widely divergent. All Christian churches appeal to the same, or nearly the same, Holy Scriptures — while among the Buddhists even the Canons are different—but all differ in their views as to the use and the interpretation of these ancient records. In short, if we may define religions as "modes of divine worship proper to different tribes, nations, or communities, and based on the belief held in common by the members of them severally,"[1] the definition applies indeed to the various Buddhistic and Christian churches and sects, but neither to Buddhism nor to Christianity as such. They fall beyond the boundaries of our morphological classification. They are powerful revelations of ethical religious spirit, which, disseminated by preaching, conquered, sometimes only after long resistance, the old religions with which they came into contact, permeated them more or less with their higher principles, and thus entirely reformed them. This preaching, this conflict, and this fusion, or compromise as one might call it, then gave birth to those religions or churches, cognate indeed, but quite distinct in character and development, which taken together we call Buddhism or Christianity. The stage of development to which each of these different churches belong must then form the subject of a special investigation.

You have doubtless observed the great importance

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica, art. "Religions."

and wide application of the remarks I have made, both as regards theory and practice. But these may suffice for the present. We need not now explain the matter further, but must endeavour to sketch and to characterise the course of religious development in the ethical stage.

All the religions which have attained this plane of development were originally personal religions, sprung from an ethic-spiritualistic movement of some kind. Whether each has been founded by one definite person, or rather whether each has sprung from the mind of a single thinker, or from the soul of a single pious man, must remain undetermined. Each of them, indeed, names a founder as the mediator through whom the divinity has communicated the highest revelation to men; but it has been doubted—if rightly or wrongly we need not stop to discuss—whether some of them, as the Buddha and Zarathushtra, are historical or purely mythical persons. At all events the ethical reform, whence these religions arose, must have been called forth either by some mighty prophetic nature, who gathered a circle of disciples or kindred spirits around him, though far superior to them, or by a small band of religious thinkers, of whom some unknown leader must have been the life and soul—in any case they are manifestations of individualism, of the religious sentiment, grown to maturity and independence, of a single person, or of a group of like-minded persons, in conflict with

the traditional religion of the state or community. And their later history always betrays this origin. Born amid toil and strife, growing up amid oppression and persecution, and yet in spite of them, and then sometimes rapidly, sometimes only after a struggle of many years or centuries, forming more or less powerful communities which play an important part in the world's history, they ever retain the indelible mark of their lineage.

Let us now consider what bearing this has upon the development of religion.

In the first place must be mentioned an important modification in the conception of revelation. The idea of revelation is common to all religions, however differently the term may be interpreted. Even the nature-gods reveal themselves by their oracles and prophets and by signs and wonders (*omina et portenta*), which are observed or are supposed to be observed in nature, and especially in the vault of heaven, or in any deviation from the ordinary course of events. Yet all these revelations, though not entirely abandoned, and though afterwards reappearing in a modified form, are eclipsed by the one great revelation of the new doctrine, which is regarded as comprising the whole law of God. At first the doctrine is undefined, still as it were in a state of fluidity, still a living word, whose authority depends solely upon the truth that it utters and the echo that it finds in the hearts of its hearers. But handed down

by the first believers to a succeeding generation which had not witnessed the source of the reformation, and augmented with additions and interpretations which did not originally belong to it, the doctrine at last assumes a fixed form; and instead of allowing its adaptation to depend upon its own spiritual efficacy and convincing force, the leaders now begin to impose it as obligatory. The books in which it is recorded in the form of a historical narrative, or of a sermon, or a law, or dialogues between God and the Mediator, destined at first merely to remind and edify believers, are at a later period united with others of much more recent origin in a single volume, to which the whole authority originally ascribed to the revelation itself is gradually transferred. The confusion of ideas, which in the nature-religions—and in higher religions too—leads to an identification of the image and symbol with the spirit, of the idol with the god, leads in this case to the identification of the revelation, and the doctrine containing it, with the writ in which it is recorded. No difference is now made between the two. If the doctrine is ancient, the book must not be later, but must be, like it, of divine and supernatural origin, and cannot have been written like other books. The Ṛshi's, the sacred singers of the Vedic hymns, did not compose these hymns, but actually saw them. The Veda itself is neither made nor created, but existed with the divinity before the Creation. There are other

sacred writings also, but they cannot compare with this book of revelation. The Brahman makes a strict distinction between the S'rauta-sutras and the Smarta-sutras; the former rest on divine revelation, the latter on sacred tradition only. The Mazdayasnians were well aware and admitted that, ages before Zarathushtra, a different mode of worship had prevailed from that introduced by him; but they maintained that the revelation had been made to the prophet at the Creation, and was only communicated by him to men much later. The oldest of the sacred prayers, the Ahunavairya prayer, which needs only to be uttered in order to make the Daêvas tremble and flee, is the word of creation by which the All-wise called everything into life; and all the parts of the Avesta, the older records, and the Gâthas in particular, are worshipped as divine beings. The Chinese also place the Kings, the canonical books, above the Shu, or classical books, although, in accordance with their national character, they are less enthusiastic in their veneration of them than the Indians and Persians. These views are not entirely new. In germ, in embryo, they are already found in the nature-religions. These too have their sacred scriptures, the use of some of which was prescribed in their ritual, as possessing special efficacy in driving out evil spirits, while other scriptures contained their sacred traditions. But they are of a different kind. They are not a religious law, or rules of faith, or a

Canon. It is in the ethical religions for the first time that we meet with Books invested with divine authority, containing the whole truth revealed by God, and from which no one may presume to deviate.

It is obvious what effect this must have on the development of religion. It must be a hindrance, no doubt, but to a less extent than is commonly supposed. You may train a tree, prune it, and fence it in; but if it is strong and healthy, it is sure to grow, in spite of its restraint, and at last bursts through all barriers. It is certain that "the letter killeth." Its authority is fatal to all progress. With a fixed doctrine, and therefore with the ethical religions, religious intolerance at length fairly sets in. In the nature-religions foreign gods and rites may be banished, people who introduced them may be punished, philosophers who find fault with the national religion may be persecuted, but only because religion is a State institution, and because those who undermine it are bad citizens and traitors to their country. And this sometimes happens also with those ethical religions which are State religions. But in these the idea of infidels, of heretics, who are denounced as devils and monsters because they speak a different religious language, makes its appearance for the first time. No one would make light of all the blood shed in the name of what is most sacred, all the fearful *autos-da-fé*, "deeds of faith," less justifiable than the

human sacrifices in the valley of Gehinnom. Yet, while we may have a horror of inquisitions, and be convinced that all religious persecution and coercion of conscience is of the Evil One, we may admit that the collection of the oldest records into one sacred Volume, and the ascription to it of a very special value, have promoted the development of religion, and have indeed been its necessary instrument, especially when mankind was still in a state of pupillarity and barbarism. A wholesome curb was thus placed upon the young community, restraining it from too great deviation from its original character; the beautiful traditions of the heroic period of their origin, the remembrance of their "first love," was thus more securely preserved; the priceless memorials were therefore treasured up with extraordinary care; and people therefore deemed it necessary to be constantly occupied with them and to interpret them for edification and instruction, as testifying with irrefragable authority against the encroachment of abuses. No progress can be permanent unless rooted in the highest development of the past, and this can only be learned from the Scriptures. If the unbridled fancy of the believer forms all sorts of irrational notions about the origin of these Scriptures, through which veneration becomes worship and even idolatry, or if a reactionary priesthood is jealous for the letter without understanding the spirit, or if the ignorant mul-

titude is satisfied with mere sounds, and degrades the venerable heirloom to the position of a fetish, yet there will always be some who penetrate more deeply into these records, and who there discover the treasures hidden from most other people. And such persons, as soon as the time is ripe for a new manifestation of religious sentiments, for a new revelation of the religious conception, and for a new form of religious community, constitute the links between a great past and an entirely new era. And when from the despised Nazareth, whence nothing good could come, the dawn of a new life shines upon humanity, or when the light of divine truth, hidden for ages by selfishness, obscured by ignorance, and clouded by superstition, suddenly bursts forth with renewed brightness in the soul of a Wycliffe or a Luther, the source of that light may be traced to earnest searchings of the Scriptures in the Galilean village and in the cloister and the cell, and to the profound impression made by them upon devout souls.

Another and no less important consequence of the peculiar origin of the ethical religions is the formation of more or less substantive religious communities distinct from the national or political community, and to a certain extent independent of it. With the ethical religions arises the Church, for each of them is necessarily embodied in a church. And let me say in passing that I should not like to dispense with

the word "church," not, however, as used in its etymological sense, but as denoting the idea popularly attached to it. All the Germanic nations — Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, High and Low Germans — employ a word usually derived from the Greek *τὸ κυριακὸν, ἡ κυριακὴ,* or by some from the Latin *curia,* and by Professor Wackernagel, a high authority, from the Celtic *cyrch,* but which, at all events, was at first applied to the building where people met for worship, and transferred thence to the community itself. All the Romanic nations, on the other hand, use a form of the Greek word *ἐκκλησιὰ—ecclesia, église, chiesa*—which in pre-Christian times denoted an assembly of the people. But of late, on the Continent at least, several religious radicals have shown a disposition to ostracise both Church and Ecclesia, and to substitute for them the word Community or Congregation. People have witnessed, and perhaps themselves suffered, so much religious persecution by the existing churches, and so much opposition by them to free religious development, that they prefer the word community, as better denoting spontaneous association. But I fear that this would lead to a lamentable confusion of terms, and, worse still, to religious anarchy. The religious community is no more the Church than the civic community is the State. For we do not apply the word Church to any single form or specific system, such as the

Roman Catholic, but to the aggregate of all the religious organisations, wherever locally situated, just as we use the word State in speaking either of a despotic or a constitutional monarchy, or of a federative republic, or of that "one and indivisible," which, as a rule, gives an edifying example of internal divisions. We shall therefore continue to apply the word Church, in a concrete sense, to the more or less independent religious organisations which embrace a number of kindred communities, and in general, in the abstract, to the whole domain of religion in so far as it manifests itself substantively in society.

This short digression was necessary in order to establish my view that the Church comes into existence with the rise of the ethical religions. We must, however, again look back for a moment. For the germ of this development also lurks in the past. In the nature-religions the organisation of the worship still coincides with that of social life, and thus, according to its stage of development, with the family, the tribe, the state, or the people. In the head of the family are united the highest civil authority and the religious leadership. In Egypt the king and his sons are invested with the highest sacerdotal dignities, while the other priests are merely substitutes, appointed by them, their officials, who at the same time discharge civil and even military duties. The same kind of thing happened in Babylon and Assyria, where the kings

attached great importance to their sacerdotal titles. The same tradition was so firmly rooted in Greece and Rome that in the Athenian republic the Archon who conducted the public worship was styled *βασιλεὺς*, and in the republic of Rome the Patrician who presided over the ancient *sacra* was called Rex, while the dignity of Pontifex Maximus was conferred upon the head of the State for the time being.

Gradually, however, the different phases of spiritual life, science and philosophy, art and morality, but above all religion, strive within the limits of the State to cast off its supremacy. This takes place chiefly in two ways. One is, that powerful priesthoods are formed and use the respect shown them by the people, and the influence they thus exercise, in order to overcome the supremacy of the State, or at least to dictate to it, and even to supersede it entirely when they find an opportunity. Such a priesthood is at first a profession which does not merely devote itself to religion, but exclusively rules over all intellectual life, and takes care, as long as possible, that science, if such there already be, letters, and art do not emancipate themselves from their authority. In the State also this profession does its utmost to get the upper hand and to gain the mastery over all other professions. For this purpose it continues in close union with the State. No one as yet dreams of the independence of religion and its representatives. But there are two alterna-

tives. Either the priests and scholars are the king's powerful ministers, or they govern the State, in which case, not being qualified for the task, they usually bring their country to the brink of ruin. But although the State and religion—the latter still represented by a profession in which is centred the whole intellectual, æsthetic, and ethical life of the people—are as yet indissolubly united, the attempt of that profession to gain the mastery over the temporal powers is a proof that the spiritual and especially the religious element is becoming more conscious of its dignity and is striving to emancipate itself.

Another and more decisive means is the formation of small associations which aim at supplementing the public worship or at superseding it. This tendency shows itself even in the religions swayed by Animism. In the case of the North American Indians it leads to the formation of small cliques to which no one is admitted without first having undergone severe tests of self-command and perseverance, but whose members are then regarded as raised far above the rest of their tribe, and brought into closer relation with the higher spirits. Among the Polynesians, and even the Negroes, similar secret associations occur. In the higher religions also we meet with societies of the same kind, but of course animated by purer ideas and more in conformity with the higher civilisation—such as the various Chinese, Indian, and Persian sects, the Essenes

in Israel, the Hanifites in Arabia, the Eleusinian mysteries, the Pythagoreans, the Orphics, the Neoplatonists in Greece, and, to mention one other instance, the monastic orders and sects in the middle ages. These associations rarely survive the religions from which they have sprung, and sometimes even die out before them. But under favourable circumstances, when the time is ripe, and the need of reform is urgent, they grow into larger communities, vying with the prevailing religion, and after a longer or shorter struggle entirely superseding it. All the ethical religions or churches have sprung from such small societies, of which, as a rule, some highly gifted leader has been the life and soul. And the churches thus possess a certain independence of the national and political community. At first they confine themselves to their own people, and direct their efforts solely to reforming or replacing the native cult. But they do not yet coincide with the people as their old religion did. A number of persons, or even a majority, hold aloof and cling to their traditional ancestral faith. In some cases the new doctrines are rejected by the people with whom they originated, as was the case from the very first with Christianity in Israel, and, after a long conflict, with Buddhism in India. And even such as do not at first aspire to Universalism are always ready on certain conditions to admit foreigners to their communion. You may note the Turanian Zarathushtrians

mentioned by the Avesta, the Proselytes of Judaism, and the conversion of Japan to Confucianism, and of the Dravidian and other Anarian peoples of India to Brahmanism.

The ethical religions also, and even some of the highest, such as the Buddhistic and Christian groups, may become State churches. But they become so merely as churches privileged above others, and not as coinciding with the State; and as such they form a distinct body, and cannot prevent the citizens from setting up other church communions independent of the State.

The rise of such more or less substantive churches is a weighty factor in the history of religious development. Called into life by religious self-consciousness, they are destined, and indeed bound, to vindicate that principle in the first place. From their birth dates the emancipation of religion. We have indicated how important it is for development that the purity of tradition should be preserved, and how impossible it is for any progress to be true and lasting unless firmly rooted in and springing from tradition. And of this tradition, set down in sacred records, the Church is now the authorised custodian. The task of her ministers and her organs is to examine these documents and to interpret them, and to reconcile the principles and doctrine they lay down with the ever-varying and deepening needs of the age. She must foster the religious truth,

thus handed down, in the members of her communion; she must defend it against attacks from without, and she must proclaim it far and wide. But she can only do so when she becomes fully conscious of her proper vocation, and when she devotes herself exclusively to the performance of the task for which she alone is qualified and commissioned. She is entitled to sovereignty within her own domain, the domain of conscience, of spiritual life, of religious conviction. No power in the world, I mean no external power, has any jurisdiction over her in these matters. But she forfeits her rights as soon as she encroaches upon a domain that is not her own, as soon as she is actuated by ambition or self-interest, and denies to others the freedom she claims for herself; as soon as she begins to domineer over the State, over science, philosophy, and art, and thus hinders the development of other manifestations of man's spiritual life. People misjudge the Church, and are unjust to the clergy of whatever communion they may be, when they regard her as an obstacle in herself in the way of progress, and condemn and hate her on that account. But, as a rule, such misjudgment is caused by her own arrogance and worldly ambition. As guardian of the highest interests of mankind, as representative of the Infinite in the Finite, as in the world yet not of the world, she has a sublime vocation, provided she does not abdicate it by secularising herself and sullying her pure robes in the turmoil of political passions,

of social strife, and of the struggle for material interests; provided above all that she continues to develop and to be a living community, that she does not become fossilised, and does not cling to antiquated forms when the spirit which bloweth where it listeth has need of others; provided she does not lose faith in the power of truth and the independence of religion, thus despairing of herself and her vocation, and try to maintain them by extrinsic authority or swathe them in the cerements of a mummy—in a word, provided she is the living witness of a living religion.

When she ceases to be this, the Church or religious community becomes a hindrance to religious development, or, to speak more accurately, she ceases to contribute to it. For the mighty stream of development is stronger than the dams with which any church can try to stem it, and pursues its course in spite of her and without her aid. This leads us to consider a third result of the peculiar origin of the ethical religions—namely, that the individualism of which they are born can never be entirely killed by the power of the community. Conversely, individualism can never kill religion. I do not maintain that an ethical religion may not perish when ousted by the superior power of another. But I know that this has never happened. This is a remarkable fact which deserves to be carefully noted. All the nature-religions of antiquity, even the highest and most beautiful, have died out with the

peoples to which they belonged — the Egyptian and Chaldean, the Greek and the Roman, the Germanic and Slavonic, and many others. The ethical religions, on the other hand, have an individuality vigorous enough to withstand even the most violent revolutions. The Persian empire became the prize of Mohammedan conquerors and adopted their religion. Yet the religion of Zarathushtra still survives, though partly in exile, and flourishes chiefly in India, where it has found hospitality. The religion of Kong-tse, though it already had a rival in the popular Taoism, found a second in Buddhism (a system despised, indeed, by the upper classes, but largely diffused among the lower), and yet it succeeded in maintaining its ground against both. The mere name of Judaism suggests another example. Israel is scattered throughout the whole world. Its unity and independence as a nation are annihilated. It is intermingled with the Goyim, speaks their languages, respects their laws, obeys their princes. But everywhere it carries with it its Law and its Prophets, and remains true to its ancient traditions. Two mighty offshoots have sprung from its trunk, and these have already become widely branching stems, but the old tree still stands firmly rooted and in full blossom. This is a type of the development in the ethical period. A community which owes its origin to individual piety can never altogether disavow that piety, and derives from it the reforming power which

enables it for a long time to keep pace with general development. The community itself, as the guardian and interpreter of the records of the revelation whence it sprang, fosters individual piety by its preaching and instruction, and unconsciously teaches others to discover in it the germs of something higher than it has itself realised or is capable of realising. Then, trembling for its own existence, and alarmed by the bold conceptions of its own sons, which it cannot understand, it casts them out — or it may happen that they voluntarily withdraw, having outgrown their ancient hampering limits. Do not let us mourn over this as if it were retrogression, for it is really progress. Let us rather deplore the petty divisions, the religious dissensions, and the bigoted hate which, instead of combating error, persecutes the erring. Let us rather rejoice over the ever-increasing wealth of varieties and the ever-growing distinctness and vigour of personalities. For this is the true path of development, the only path from a dead or dying unity, which regards form as all-important, to spiritual unity, to the communion of the saints, which, while true to its own cherished convictions, can discover genuine piety under manifold forms, and takes delight in the fact that every one may glorify God in his own language, the language he best understands, welling up from his own soul.

But the three main points to which I have directed your attention are far from exhausting the question as

to what place should be assigned to the ethical religions in the history of development. It has been thought by some that these religions were, in their origin at least, more or less strictly monotheistic, or else pantheistic, and that it was only at a later period that they admitted survivals of the polytheistic nature-cult. And it may indeed be maintained with some reason that a religion emanating from personal piety must necessarily be either monotheistic or pantheistic. Another question is, how far the spiritualism which is undoubtedly peculiar to the ethical religions, and which shows itself in ever stricter renunciation of the world and self-chastisement, in hostility to all that is natural and humanistic, in opposition to art and science, to commerce and industry, and in a doctrine of redemption that sees no way of escape from the miseries of this world but by the extinction of existence itself—how far this pessimistic and ascetic spiritualism can be regarded as religious-moral evolution, or whether it is rather an exaggerated reaction against the naturalism which its votaries desired to overcome. These questions, however, are not only too wide to be dealt with here, but in the present state of our science they are hardly ripe for solution. For the present they only afford an indication of the directions our studies must take, and they still demand a thorough and many-sided investigation. In a different connection we shall recur to them at a later stage.

There is still, however, an important question to which many would desire an answer. The ethical religions, especially those which belong to the universalistic, and above all to the Christian group, are the highest we know, the highest in existence. Are they also the highest conceivable? Shall we say that science is unable to give an answer because it founds on experience, and can only deal with what is perceivable, what has already assumed a definite form, and not with what is future and hypothetical? Natural science, at all events, makes forecasts, which the issue verifies. Are the mental sciences incapable of doing the same? The development of religion is, as already remarked, the labour of the human mind to create more and more perfect forms for the ever-growing wants of the religious soul. Can we assume that this labour is at an end, and that the creative power of the human mind is exhausted? Observe that the question is not whether we may still expect a higher revelation than that vouchsafed to man in Christianity. Even those who, like myself, are convinced that the Gospel, rightly understood, contains the eternal principles of true religion, may well conceive that, besides the existing ethical religions, and probably from their bosom, others will yet be born which will do better and more complete justice to these principles, and which will then perhaps exhibit a somewhat different character from the religions we

have termed ethical or supernaturalistic. Those who closely scan the age we now live in cannot be blind to the new aspirations which manifest themselves from time to time, and which enable us to form some idea of the character likely to be assumed by the newer forms. This is our general and preliminary answer to the weighty question. We shall perhaps be in a position to give a more definite answer after we have not only traced the gradations of religious development, but determined the different directions in which it moves. To this latter task our next lecture will be devoted.

LECTURE VI.

DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT.

We have hitherto studied religion in the various stages of its development. In other words, we have directed attention to the gradations of difference between the various religions, and endeavoured to classify them in accordance with these gradations. This, however, is only a part of our task. There is also a specific difference in development, a difference in kind, which requires to be noted. Such specific differences are observed, not only in the domain of religion, but in that of general human development, in persons, peoples, and families of peoples. As examples of this in the case of persons, men of rare talent, pioneers in science or philosophy, art or letters, equals in rank, yet in widely different walks of life, I need only name Darwin and Pasteur, Plato and Aristotle, Leonardo and Michelangelo, Raphael and Rembrandt, Shakespeare and Goethe, while many other examples will readily

occur to every one. Similarly the peoples of Western Europe stand on the same plane of civilisation, but have undergone very different processes of development. So, too, those great families of peoples, or races, as they are usually but not very happily termed, which we call the Aryan and the Semitic, present a striking contrast, yet rank as equals, in virtue of their respective contributions to the general development of mankind, except that the development of one of them took place earlier than that of the other. This will suffice to explain why I distinguish the differences from the stages of religious development. By the term direction I understand a spiritual current which sweeps along a single principle of religion, or some fundamental religious idea, more or less regardless of others, to its extreme consequences. Two religions may stand equally high, though their process of development has been very different. And, conversely, two may occupy very different levels of development and yet agree in character. This is a matter which also requires to be specially studied by the votaries of our science.

The causes of this phenomenon are obvious. The differences in question are determined, as, in the case of individuals, by disposition, temperament, and circumstances of life, so in religions, as well as in communities, by nationality, history, vicissitudes, and above all by their origin. All human development is one-sided, and more or less so in accordance with its lower or higher

condition, everything human being defective and limited. Thence arise various different conceptions, each perhaps containing a portion of the truth, yet necessarily all incomplete. Now the character of a religion, and therefore also the direction of its development, depend chiefly upon the conception which people form of their god or gods, their conception of what the deity is towards man, and conversely of man's relation to the deity, and of the relation of God, and therefore of god-serving man also, towards the world of phenomena. It is not an abstract philosophical conception of God, born of the speculations of a single thinker, but a conception for which one cannot always account, emanating from a state of mind, from an emotional condition, and at length put into shape by thought and by poetical imagination. It is an utterance of feeling through the medium of images and doctrines, and above all of religious observances, by means of which men seek communion with their deity. Such a conception, when once it has become the fundamental and predominating idea of a religion, though not always distinctly expressed, stamps its impress on the whole of the subsequent development. Other religious thoughts, as legitimate, and received into the conception of other religions, now fall into the shade, though not perhaps wholly neglected, and even run the risk of being thrust entirely into the background. And the more this is the case, the earlier the demarcation has been made, so

much the more one-sided will be the religious life in such a religion or family of religions, and so much the wider will be the gulf which separates it from others.

To these general causes of the differences in religions must be added the particular tendencies or directions. These are mainly of two kinds, corresponding with the folk-religions and the ethical religions respectively. Comparative philology, which had the misfortune to be in fashion for a time and to be practised, not only by qualified men of science but also by superficial amateurs, has of late fallen into disrepute. This was perhaps partly due to its youthful presumption, to the rashness of its supposed results, and its mania for trying to explain everything by itself. But those who have overwhelmed it with unmerited reproach, and would repudiate it altogether, simply incur ridicule, and in their ignorance deprive themselves of an invaluable means of throwing light on the history of human development. And one of the incontestable results of that science, confirmed by ethnography, is that peoples may be classified in groups in accordance with the languages they speak. The study of religions has also led to a similar result. While philology has established the existence of at least two great families of languages, the Aryan or Indo-Germanic and the Semitic, the study of religions has demonstrated that two distinct groups of religions also correspond with these two families. Between the languages, as well as

between the religions, of the peoples who belong to these families, there is an unmistakable difference, and yet at the same time so undeniable a resemblance that we are obliged to regard them as descendants of one prehistoric language or religion. We have not, however, simply applied the doctrines of philology to the study of religion, as if affinity of languages necessarily implied affinity of religions. No doubt the science of language has paved the way for that of religion, and has laid it under great obligations, but not so far as to relieve it of the necessity of independent research. In every religion, too, we have found a twofold tendency of development, the one peculiar to it alone, the other common to it along with others; and a twofold character, the one its individual, the other its family character. Now in the case of the nature-religions, both lower and higher, this agreement can only be explained on the ground that they are related, or, in other words, that they have sprung from an ancient religion long since extinct; while their differences are accounted for by the fact that, owing to the breaking up of the mother-folk into a number of others, these have developed independently and assumed their own peculiar character under the influence of a variety of surroundings. Nor even in the case of the ethical religions, although born of individual preaching, of a willed reformation, do they entirely disown their family character even where the reform has not sprung from

within their own nation, but has been called into life by the preaching of foreign prophets or apostles. And in this last case, in the religions we have called universalistic, and where, as we formerly indicated, new groups or families of religions, Buddhistic, Mohammedan, and Christian, have thus been formed, we can still distinctly trace the after-effects of the ancient ethical-religious tendency. For the student of our science this is one of the most fascinating objects of research, and one which sometimes leads to striking results. We must now illustrate these general reflections with a few examples from history.

For this purpose we select the two families of religions best known to us, and the study of which is most advanced, although they still afford abundant room for further investigation. As you may suppose, I mean the two which I have repeatedly mentioned, and which, in accordance with the languages of the peoples professing them, and for the sake of convenience, are sometimes called the Aryan or Indo-Germanic and the Semitic. In order, however, to denote the direction in which they have developed, I have termed them the *theanthropic* and the *theocratic*. These words will be readily understood. The one, a compound of *theos*, god, and *anthrôpos*, man, indicates the importance attached to the *theion en anthrôpôi*, "the divine in man," and his relationship to God; the other, from *theos* and *kratein*, to govern, denotes that the favourite theme

dwelt upon by these religions is the supremacy of God over the world of man and of nature. Now all religions are necessarily both theanthropic and theocratic to a certain though very different extent. In other words, a religion entirely destitute of one of these elements would not be truly a religion at all. Adoration, which is the life of religion, assumes and postulates a feeling not only of relationship but also of inferiority to God. Neither can be wholly dispensed with, even where one is cultivated to the subordination of the other, and carried to its extreme consequences. Even in the theanthropic religions, man is never made quite equal to the deity, at all events not to the highest deity, but is always subordinated to it. And in the theocratic religions man is also created after God's image and seeks to draw near to God. And thus it is only a difference in proportion, one only of these elements forcing its way into the foreground, never entirely excluding the other, but throwing it into the shade and thus hindering its development. As soon as this one-sidedness threatens to become extreme, a reaction sets in. We therefore only mean that one of the two families develops more in the theocratic, the other more in the theanthropic direction. The theocratic element predominates among the so-called Semites, the theanthropic among the so-called Aryans.

This appears at the very outset from the general names they give to their gods. I have pointed out

that what chiefly characterises a religion is its conception of the relation between God and man, between God and the world, and this is just what is usually expressed in such general names. In the theocratic religions all the gods are, in one way or another, mighty, exalted rulers. The name most commonly given to them is *El*, or *Ilu*. The original meaning of the word is uncertain. It seems to me probable that it means the "lofty," "the supreme"; others, and the Semites themselves, interpret it as "the mighty and strong." For our illustration the difference is immaterial. At their head is sometimes placed *El ʕelyôn*, the most high god, of whose priest Malkisedek we read in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. Or they are called lords, "*Bêli, Baʻalim, Adonim*," for which terms the Aramæans, and the Philistines following their example, use other synonyms. "King," *Malik*, "*Sharru*," is hardly less used. In all of them is thus involved the idea of lordship and sovereignty; and it need hardly be pointed out that in the East, at all events among the peoples just mentioned, this means an absolute and unlimited sovereignty. And accordingly, in his relation to the heavenly rulers, the worshipper most commonly calls himself their "servant" or "slave," *ebed, abdu*, or sometimes their "*protégé*" or "client," or at most their "favourite," *migir, naram*, like the favourites of arbitrary rulers and absolute sovereigns. The depth of self-abasement towards the deity is to call one's self

its "dog," *kalbu, kèlèb.* The dignity of an ambassador or prophet of God is reserved for a few select persons only. The right to be called the son of God, and to give God the name of Father, belongs in the theocratic religions to the king alone as God's representative and vicegerent on earth; and in Israel, for instance, even this is not permitted, and he is only styled Yahve's anointed. Such predominance of the same root-idea in all the names which denote the deity in general, and in those which its worshippers call themselves as such, cannot be accidental, but must necessarily be connected with the character of such a family of religions.

In the general or generic names of the gods in the theanthropic religions a greater variety prevails. And this was to be expected. The peoples who represent the theocratic religions, the Semites, live in close proximity as near neighbours. The Aryan peoples who represent the theanthropic religions have been scattered from the most ancient times over three-quarters of the globe. Both the languages and the religions of the former are much more akin than those of the latter. And the theocratic root-idea is also much more easily expressed in a number of synonyms than the theanthropic. In this case the most prevalent title of the deity is *deva, deus* (with a number of cognate forms), which means "the heavenly ones," or perhaps originally "the shining ones," and then, opposed to these at a

later period by the Iranians and Indians, *ahura*, *asura*, "the beings," "the living spirits," a signification which was also perhaps originally that of the Germanic-Scandinavian *asa*, *æsir*. The meaning of these words is so vague and indefinite that *daêva* among the Iranians and *asura* among the Indians are subsequently applied to the evil spirits only. Both of these peoples are fond of calling their gods "the rich givers" or "the dispensers of fate," *bhaga*, *bagha*, and they possess this word in common with the Slavonic nations (*bogŭ*). The proper meaning of the Germanic "god" is still enigmatical. In all this there is nothing characteristic. But it is worthy of remark that, although the idea of the sovereignty of the gods is here by no means excluded, and the title of king or sovereign is given to some of them — Varuṇa is *samrâj*, "the all-ruler," Indra is *svarâj*, "the self-ruler," the Iranian Sun-god is *khshaêta*, "the ruler," or properly "the shining one"—the gods are as a rule never designated as such. And above all we must point out how fond the theanthropic religions are of calling their gods by the name of Father or Mother. Thus in the Ṛgveda, the oldest religious document of our race, some ten of the highest gods are thus named. So too in the Avesta, the sacred book of the Zarathushtrians, Ahura Mazda, the highest and only true God in the system, is frequently called Father. And the Greeks also call Zeus *patêr*, "the father of gods and men," while the Romans have Jupiter, Diespiter,

Marspiter. Our ancestors, again, called their Wodan or Odhin the Alvader, Alfödhr; but I will not insist upon this, as it has been attributed to Christian influence. Nor do I forget—and I have already pointed out—that, in the theanthropic religions of antiquity, this conception did not as yet possess the exalted significance given to it in the Gospel. Yet it involved the idea of the nearest and closest relationship. And I again ask whether it is a mere accident that the Gospel of God's fatherly love, although first preached to the Semites, was rejected by them and remained almost fruitless, while it was immediately hailed by the Aryans of Europe as the joyful message of salvation.

At all events, how genuinely the fathership of the gods was felt in antiquity is apparent from the numerous proper names in common use, especially among the Greeks and Indians, with which parents not only described their children as gifts of God (Theodôros, Theodotos, Theodosios, Diodôros, Devadatta), or as his favourites and elect ones (Theodektês, Theokritos, Theoxenos), but also as closely related to the deity (Theogeitôn—that is, God's neighbour—or Devavatta, "whom God has near him"), or even as being born of him (Theogenês, Theagenês, Devajnâ). If the feeling of God's exaltation and absolute sovereignty over man predominates in the theocratic religions, in the theanthropic it is the intimate relation between God and man that comes into the foreground, as Aratus and Kleanthes have ex-

pressed it, "We are also His offspring," or as Pindar has still more finely said in his often-quoted words: Ἓν *ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος, ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι.* ("One is the race of men, one that of the gods, from one mother we both draw our breath.")

It would take us far out of our way if I were to attempt to explain in detail how these differences of direction are reflected in the whole system of doctrine. As examples I shall only mention the doctrine of the Creation and of the Government of the world. In all the older religions the Creation is at first conceived as a making, forming, or building. But when people have outgrown this childish conception, the theocratic God creates by His mighty word: "He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast;" in the theanthropic religions, on the other hand, the leading idea is *emanation;* the whole world of phenomena emanates from the Divinity Himself, and in an endless rise and fall of worlds is exhaled and inhaled by Him.

In the government of the world the gods of the theocratic religions are the supreme or sole rulers. Even the evil spirits, destroying angels, beings that inflict calamities and diseases on mankind, are under their command, and do nothing without their permission. Such are the seven evil Utuks, sent forth by Anu, the chief Babylonian god, and such is the Satan of the Book of Job. When, even in the mind

of the Semite, the question arises how the course of the world and the lot of man can be reconciled with the justice of God, and causes him an anxious struggle, so that "his steps had well-nigh slipped," the author of the seventy-third Psalm consoles himself with the thought that the prosperity of the wicked is only transient, that their end cannot be peace, and that God will at last put them to shame. And when, in the prologue of that most beautiful of all the religious poems of antiquity, I mean the Book of Job just mentioned, the sufferings of the righteous man are represented as a trial by which the steadfastness of his faith and the constancy of his piety are to be proved, the story itself gives the true theocratic solution. The arguments of his *doctrinaire* friends have made the poor sufferer lose patience. He is not subdued. He complains of the injustice done to him. He contends with his Maker. But now God Himself enters into judgment with him, and rebukes him in an address which is really a description of His almighty power as Creator and Ruler of the world. Why He has punished Job, His faithful servant, so severely, and apparently so unjustly, and how this can be reconciled with His justice, is passed over in silence. The whole reasoning may be summed up in the question, "Art thou He who hast created all things? Art thou the Almighty who governest all things and rulest over all things?" And the answer of the

afflicted one is penitent and submissive: "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth!"

The theocratic god cannot be bound. His law governs all men, and he administers it in punishing the transgressors, but it is not binding upon himself. He acts according to his good pleasure, and is not responsible for his actions. Absolutely sovereign, he vouchsafes or withholds his favour, and no one is at liberty to inquire the reason. All that happens is not merely his will, but is also his actual work. Wherever, as in Islâm, the theocratic root-idea is carried to extreme exaggeration, all mediate causes and explanations are superfluous. For everything there is but one cause, one explanation: God wills it. And this reminds me of a story told by Alfred von Kremer in one of his interesting historical works. I am not sure whether it is authentic, but it is genuinely Arabian and highly characteristic. A Jewish physician, so the story goes, once showed an Egyptian sultan a phial filled with poison, and assured him that half of its contents was enough to kill a man. "Yes; but only when Allah wills it!" exclaimed the sultan. He then seized the phial and emptied it at a draught. Fortunately for the Commander of the Faithful, his stomach was not so strong as his faith, and immediately rejected the poison, of which it was unable to hold such a quantity. The pious Mohammedan, who would have

died of the half, was saved by taking the whole. His faith, which deserved such a result, thus gained a triumphant victory.

In the theanthropic religions the gods are very powerful, triumphing over the spirits of darkness and drought; they are the protectors and allies of their worshippers, while the latter are ever zealous to do their will. The dreaded powers of nature, Giants and Titans, Jötuns and Thursas, Iranian Daêvas, and Indian Asuras, are indeed permanently defeated, but not yet wholly annihilated. These powers reign supreme in their own kingdom, over which the good gods have no authority, and into which they may venture in the disguise of a change of form, but then only to quit it again with all possible speed; while, on the contrary, in the Babylonian myth of Ishtar's descent into hell, for example, Allat, the queen of the lower regions, is compelled by the command of Êa, one of the chief gods, to deliver up the goddess whom she holds captive. Even in the ethical Zarathushtrism, which perhaps arose to some extent under Semitic influence, while Ahura Mazda reigns in heaven Angra Mainyu reigns in hell; and in the Vayu, the region between heaven and hell, the earth and its atmosphere, both of them hold sway, so that the good god cannot prevent his pure creations from being marred by the counter-creations of the Spirit of Lies. And so there ever remains a portion of the world withdrawn from the

dominion of the gods. Their power is limited, their will does not always prevail, and much happens that is diametrically opposed to their good pleasure. Nor is it always certain that this limited sovereignty is eternal. In the Ragnarök, the "twilight of the gods," Asas and Vans will perish, and a few of them only will live again in the regenerated world. And in the ears of the afflicted Promêtheus resounds the prophecy that the sway of the god who torments him, the now supreme Zeus, will one day have an end.

And a further point to be emphasised is that the will of the gods is not always the supreme law in the universe. I shall not now attempt to broach the difficult question as to the power of Fate in the theanthropic religions. Were I to try to deal with it thoroughly, I fear that neither our allotted time, nor my own powers, nor your patience, would be equal to the task. But I must not altogether pass it over in silence. The Homeric poems often mention the Aisa or Moira, terms which have been translated Destiny or Fate, and for which the word Anangkê, necessity, is sometimes used. Now, the question about which scholars differ is whether the gods control this destiny and establish this necessity, or whether they themselves are controlled by it, and compelled to obey it even when contrary to their own wishes. Evidence may be adduced in favour of both views. An overruling Destiny, the Moira of the gods, and Fate, the

Aisa of Zeus, are sometimes spoken of. This is an argument in favour of the first view. But there are other passages in which Zeus consults Fate and gives effect to it, although opposed to his own wish and to his desire to save one of his favourites. This supports the second view. Be this as it may, Moira, or Destiny, is in each case clearly distinguished from the gods, and is sometimes even placed above them. It is not their own sovereign decree that they proclaim and execute as being their own will, but a necessity, the origin of which cannot be questioned, and which is determined independently of the will of even the highest gods. This conception is not an inevitable result of polytheism, but it occurs in the theanthropic religions only, and is indeed possible in these alone.

The same holds true of two other conceptions, which are in fact the two phases of a single conception, and which neither occur nor are possible in the theocratic religions, but spring directly from the theanthropic principle—I allude to *apotheosis* and *incarnation*, or the deification of men and the impersonation of gods. Mediators between man and God, messengers of God, who proclaim His blessings and revelations to the children of men, and conversely lay their prayers and offerings before His throne, these beings occur in every religion. They are either gods, real and visible, but always subordinate, generally gods of the sun, of fire, of the lightning, or of the wind, or they are lower

heavenly spirits, or they are men, dedicated to God, animated with His spirit, endowed by Him with miraculous power and superhuman knowledge, or favoured with special revelations. Nor are they absent from the theocratic religions, and the less so in proportion as the supreme deity himself is more highly exalted above the world, and more widely separated from man. But the idea that a god can actually become a man is an abomination to the votaries of a theocratic religion. That "ye shall be as gods" they regard as the voice of the Tempter. In the theanthropic religions, which are wholly swayed by the conception of the theanthrôpos, the god-man, this, on the other hand, is precisely the favourite ideal, the goal towards which they strive with all their might. In theology this becomes the source of the boldest creations of the religious imagination. The gods to whom the devout rightly wish to draw near must themselves become men, though for a time only, and though they can never thereby wholly divest themselves of their heavenly origin or lose their divinity. Every event in their history, therefore, differs from all that happens in the case of other men. From birth to death their life is an unbroken series of miracles. Yet these sons of gods are really men so long as they dwell on earth, like Apollo and Kṛishna when they tend the flocks as shepherd-boys, or like Hêraklês and Rama when as servants or exiles they perform laborious tasks

and subdue the enemies of their worshippers, or like the other *avatâras* of the god Vishṇu, as narrated by the Indian legends. Conversely, men or supposed men are transformed into gods. In the apotheosis the myths of deified men are reversed, and are transformed into legends of great heroes, prophets, or reformers of bygone ages. Take, for example, Cyrus, the founder of the great Persian empire; or Zarathushtra, the Iranian reformer; or Buddha Gautama, the founder of a widespread monastic order. Even in their lifetime, princes are deified, and they acquiesce in this in the interests of their dynasty, or even usurp the honour themselves. This deification of princes is very ancient. We find it practised especially in Egypt from the earliest period. The earliest Babylonian kings also prefix the sign of divinity to their written names. But we note that, when the Semitic element had become stronger in Babylonia and at last attained supremacy, the kings no longer called themselves gods, but merely the favourites, the beloved, or the priests of the deity. In Israel, too, the person of the king was sacred, but only as God's anointed, and not as a god or the son of a god. Aryan princes, however, are often called *devas*, and love to trace their descent from some deity. The abolition of the kingship in Greece or Rome, and the more rationalistic direction of Greek civilisation, thrust this idea for a time into the background, but it revived and then finally died out in the apotheosis of the Roman emperors.

But if the prince is a god, every man is really destined to become so, and to this object, therefore, all the efforts of the pious in the theanthropical religions are directed. In order to see these religions in full vigour we should study the Indian examples. All the other theanthropic religions of which historical records exist have come more or less into contact with the theocratic, and have been influenced by them. This is probably true of the Persian religions, and certainly of the Greek, and thus mediately of the Roman also. Christian and classical elements are unmistakable in the Edda, which contains the oldest, though relatively recent, documents of the Scandinavian religion, yet not to the extent maintained by some authorities. But it seems to me very doubtful whether the Aryans of India ever came under Semitic influence, so as to lead them to adopt anything from a theocratic religion. We there accordingly become acquainted with theanthropism in extreme one-sidedness. The offerings, at first regarded as homage to the gods, and as means of strengthening them or of securing their help, then become mere mystic observances, which have no connection with any definite god, but are only intended to procure supernatural power for the worshippers, in order that they may counteract the power of the hostile spirits. And these practices accordingly soon fall into disrepute. This superhuman power can be procured better in other ways, as by calm meditation and abstinence. For by these means, by one's own

power and exertions, one can attain the *moksha* or redemption—that is, one may thus become exalted above all that is finite and limited, above pleasure and pain, above desire and aversion, above love and hatred—and one can thus attain a condition which, consistently carried out, culminates in the non-existence, the Buddhistic Nirvâṇa. But in this condition man becomes equal—nay, superior—to the gods. There are numerous stories of mythical penitents who have attained to such a pitch of self-denial that the gods tremble for their own power and dominion, and contrive all kinds of seductions and deterrents in order to overthrow from his exalted position the saint who has thus outstripped them. The Indian pantheism, which identifies the individual soul with the world-soul, paves the way for different systems and for Buddhism, which is only to a small extent a reaction against Brahmanism, but is mainly a continuation of it. It has been called atheistic; and so it is from the theocratic point of view, as well as from our own; but in reality it is not. It exalts man to the throne of the highest deity. In the legends of Buddha scholars have detected an ancient sun-myth, and rightly so. But that is no reason why Buddha should be called an ancient deity. Whether historical or mythical, he is a man, the founder of an order of monks; he lived as a man, as I am convinced, or at least he was thought of as a man at the outset, and

it was only after he had been glorified by his adherents that all the attributes of the highest god were united in him and that a marvellous career was woven for him out of the ancient god-myths. He, the Râjanya, not even a Brahman, succeeded, by obtaining the *bodhi*, or highest illumination, in exalting himself above all the gods. Indra and Brahman, the two highest deities of the two preceding periods, the Vedic and the Brahmanic, are placed beside him as ministering satellites. And thus theanthropism, in its one-sided development, with an almost entire disregard for the truth embodied in the theocratic religions, has reached its final goal. God, in the theocratic sense, has been dethroned, and man has become God.

In the theocratic religions, on the other hand, the gulf between divinity and humanity becomes ever wider as their development progresses. Stories are told in the olden time of gods who descended to the earth, but at a time when beings of a different mould from the present race of men inhabited it; and one hears of a few privileged persons who enjoyed communion with God as a man with his friend, but only in bygone ages; and of prophets, also, who were once permitted to see His glory, but who on His approach tremblingly covered their faces, and when they uncovered them, saw nothing but the skirts of the divine garment. But with later generations God communicated through His messengers or angels only, or revealed

His will in dreams and visions, by signs and wonders. No one is now in direct communion with Him. The theocratic god dwells in secret. He is holy, which originally meant unapproachable. The man who sees Him must die. Even the lower gods may not penetrate into the heaven of the Supreme. In the narrative of the Babylonian flood they flee thither, terrified by the rising waters, but they can only crowd round the entrance. They are not admitted within it. The temples of the theanthropic gods stand open. They are sacred places, but every one who approaches reverently may enter, in order to worship and offer his gifts, while distinguished persons are even privileged to have their statues placed in the sanctuary beside that of God himself. But the temples of the theocratic gods are enclosed within lofty walls. Although strangers, who are not actual worshippers, may sometimes be admitted to the outer fore-court, the sacred ground upon which the temple stands may not be trodden by profane feet; the temple itself may only be entered by the priests, and even for them, with a single exception, the inmost sanctuary is forbidden ground. In Islâm, the most theocratic of all religions, these prohibitions are even extended to the whole region of the holy places. And there, in the inmost sanctuary of his earthly dwelling, where no one but the king, who is regarded as the son of the deity, or one or more of the high priests, may enter at special seasons, dwells the supreme deity him-

self in holy calm, undisturbed by the tumult of the worshippers, veiled from the gaze of the curious. There he is represented either by mystic symbols, dead or living, or by an image, and in this case usually by the oldest and most sacred in existence, which has been made by no mortal hand, but has fallen from heaven itself. Not there, but in other parts of the temple only, may be placed newer, finer, and more artistic images. Where no image of the deity is admitted, as in the case of the temple of Jerusalem, there it is expressly said that Yahve dwells in the holiest of holies, between the cherubîm who guard the sacred ark.

The same characteristic difference also shows itself in the ritual. But in this case, too, we must refrain from entering into details, and content ourselves with a few outlines. Even in the theanthropic religions there is no lack of reverence for the gods, and even dread of them. But between them and their worshippers there prevails a certain confidentiality, or rather familiarity, which sometimes borders on irreverence and almost becomes irreligious. It is only unsophisticated simplicity on the part of the Vedic singer when he says to his god, "If I were you, and you were I, then, after such an offering I should give you what you desired." But it is worse when the worshipper does not scruple to overreach the deity by cunning trickery. I allude to such mythical stories as that of Promêtheus in Hesiod,[1]

[1] Theog., 535 *seq.*

and that of Numa Pompilius in Ovid.[1] Allow me just to remind you of them. Promêtheus, the ancient god of fire, who has gradually become a god-man, ever in opposition to Zeus, and disposed to cheat him whenever he can, teaches men, of whom he is the creator and protector, how, in offering a sacrifice, to divide the different parts of the slain animal: Zeus can then choose for himself. He conceals the edible parts under the skin of the animal, as if they were of no value, and lays them on one side, while on the other side he exhibits the bones and thighs covered with shining fat. The pious Hesiod, who cannot bear the idea of Zeus being really tricked, represents him as being generous enough to be content with the inferior parts, although the ruse has by no means escaped him. The original version of the legend was probably somewhat different. Be this as it may, the essential point is, that in the theanthropic religions men keep the best things for themselves and offer to the gods what is of inferior value for human beings. The myth is an ætiological one—that is to say, it serves as an explanation of such customs.

A similar myth forms the basis of the roguish story about Numa Pompilius told by Ovid, which was intended to account for the abolition of human sacrifices formerly in vogue with the Romans, and demanded by Jupiter Elicius as well as by other gods. *Caput*, a head, is required by the god. Numa brings him an

[1] Fast., 3, 339 *seq.*

onion, *cepa.* No; it is a human head that Jupiter demands! Numa then presents a human hair, *capillus.* No, exclaimed Jupiter, a living soul, *anima!* Numa next tries a little fish, *maena.* Jupiter is then good-natured enough to be amused with the joke, and thenceforth contents himself with substitutes for human sacrifices. This story, which was certainly not invented by the poet, though told in his own peculiar way, brings out the familiarity of the worshipper with his god still more clearly than the former. And here the man who thus trifles with the deity is not a rebellious Titan, who seeks to overthrow the supremacy of the Olympians, but the devout favourite of the gods, the mythical king-lawgiver, whose name Numa, akin to the Greek *nomos,* he derives from this latter capacity, and who is regarded by the pious Romans as the recipient of divine revelations. Yet no difficulty seems to have been felt in making such a saint act so strangely towards the highest god.

This last story reminds one of the question how it comes that human sacrifices, so general in barbarous ages, though offered from very different motives, continue so long in use where theocratic religions prevail, while in the theanthropic they are abolished at a very early period, except where they still linger in some few primitive local cults. In the Aitareya-Brâhmana occurs the story of S'unasépha, the son of a Brahman living in the woods, whom his father, impelled by

hunger and tempted by a great reward, is about to slay in honour of Varuṇa, in place of the king's son, but is saved by the gods he invokes and is adopted by the priest Visvâmitra as his son. So too the priest Kalchas demands of Agamemnon, who has offended Artemis, the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia in order to appease the wrath of the goddess; but when the king is about to carry out the behest, the goddess herself carries off the maiden to Tauris and makes her immortal. No mention is made of human sacrifices in the religion of the Persian peoples. In Greece they had become the exception, and in Italy too, where they had once been exacted in various cults, but were soon replaced by other offerings or by effigies. And in the case of the Romans we have seen that the abolition dates so far back as Numa. Nay, even the Egyptians, with their half-theocratic, half-theanthropic religion, had already set the example. But they are kept up in the theocratic religions of Western Asia, at least among the Phœnicians, Aramæans, and Hebrews, who offered their children in sacrifice to the god of fire. Who does not remember the story of Mesha, the king of Mo'ab, slaying his eldest son in honour of Ḳamosh, when his capital was surrounded by the united armies of Israel and Judah? How deeply rooted the conviction was that the gods could only thus be propitiated and their judgments averted, is apparent from the case of the Carthaginians, who kept up these practices long

after the conquest of their city by the Romans, and were not even deterred by the dread of their austere masters. It is also well known what pains the prophets of Judah took to put a stop to this cruel and unnatural practice of their people, which was repugnant to their own ethical conceptions. We may further note how it is spoken of in the beautiful narrative of Abraham's offering, which was designed to induce its abolition. It is not disapproved of as such, nor is it represented as cruel or inhuman. On the contrary, Yahve demands it, and the father of the faithful is at once prepared to obey; and this is imputed to him as a proof of his faith in God's promises and of his piety. This is quite a different case from the one above mentioned in the Indian story, where the author distinctly brands the Brahman Ajigarta, who would slay his son, as a cruel and unnatural father. The Hebrew writer, on the other hand, although the bloody deed is not carried out in this case either, proceeds on the principle that God may demand even inhuman sacrifices from His worshippers, and that they are bound meekly to obey.

Why is it that peoples civilised so long before the Greeks and Romans, before the Indians and Persians, and in a certain sense their teachers, lagged so far behind them in this respect? It has been asserted that the Semites are naturally more cruel and blood-thirsty than the Aryans, but no proof of this has been

adduced. The great king of Persia, who boasted of being an Aryan and the son of an Aryan, was not more lenient in the punishments he inflicted upon rebels than the Semitic kings of Assur; and several of the Roman emperors, Aryans too, vied with them in that respect. The torture-chambers of the holy Inquisition and of our older European administration of justice are purely Aryan inventions, the refined cruelty of which makes one's blood run cold. There must, therefore, be some different reason. Nor is it that the Semite can be said to hold human life cheaper, or that he is less warmly attached to his own family. The reverse is the case. A life prolonged to a happy old age is one of his dearest wishes; no one can love his children better; no one delights more than he in the blessing of a numerous offspring; and above all his sons are his pride and glory. But deeper still than these human feelings there is rooted in his heart the religious sentiment which predominates in the theocratic religions, that of man's nothingness in presence of the supernatural Powers on which he knows himself dependent. To the Supreme Lord in heaven belongs all that he has, even what he holds dearest. If He demands it, it must be given. With an unlimited sovereign it is impossible to reason concerning his commandments established of old, or to join issue with him; and lest the sacrifice may seem to be offered unwillingly, the cries of the poor victim

and the wail of the anguished mother are often drowned by loud music. The lofty ethical development of the Mosaic prophets was necessary to awaken the conviction that Yahve in His loving-kindness and mercy renounced His right to such offerings, and rather takes pleasure in purity of heart and righteousness of life. But the majority of the people could not venture to believe this doctrine. Not that the prophets were unfaithful to the theocratic root-idea of the loftiness and exaltation of God's unlimited power and supremacy; but they take a more ethical and spiritualistic view of His holiness, and therefore of His supremacy also, a view too advanced for the undeveloped many.

I have endeavoured in a few outlines—and other illustrations might easily have been given—to sketch the distinctive differences between the theocratic and the theanthropic religions in order to convey an idea of what is meant by the different directions of religious development or of one-sided development. What we have observed in these two great families of religion shows itself in other cases also, differing a hundredfold, on a larger or smaller scale. It is not our purpose to trace the practical results of such one-sidedness in the religious life; but the question how far it injures or promotes the general development of religion must not be left quite unanswered.

One would imagine *a priori* that it can only injure religious development. Here we have two indispensable

elements in religion, which we may briefly call the Infinite within us and the Infinite above us, or, in religious language, God's sovereignty and man's affinity with God. Now, as we have seen, even where the one principle is unduly cultivated, the other is never wholly neglected, however much its development may lag behind; the believer seems afraid of bringing it forward to any extent lest he imperil the truth which he prizes above everything; and there comes a time when that truth so completely overshadows the other as almost to obliterate all trace of it. When theanthropism has reached the extreme verge of such one-sidedness, the only choice left is between deification of the world and atheism. And when we see how, not only the ancient nature-gods, but the higher too, who, invested with all power, are either placed at their head or supersede them—how all these objects of adoration are gradually divested of all that makes them adorable, how they tremble before the superior power of human penitents, allow themselves to be insulted by sacred singers in order to show that they are exalted above impatience and passion, and yet are surpassed in self-abnegation by the Buddha who out of compassion gives himself as food to the tigress to enable her to feed her whelps—when we see all this, atheism would almost seem preferable. And, conversely, the system that not only lays special stress on the theocratic principle, but condemns all human effort and work, wisdom and

science, art and industry, as worthless and vain—nay, even as sinful—leaves the worshipper no alternative but to bow down as a slave or to cower like a dog. But when this extreme has been reached, a wholesome reaction is at hand. It seems, therefore, that apparently conflicting, yet not irreconcilable, religious root-ideas or principles (and I allude to many others besides the two specified) must—before religious thought can combine them, or at least remove their disproportion—severally run a long course of independent development, and strain every effort to attain perfect expression. But of such special development nothing material is lost in the long-run; for its fruit is abiding, and in the end it benefits the general development of religion. Each stream thus running its own course yields its precious contribution to the development as a whole. Nor, when once the equipoise is established, shall we ever relapse into the old one-sidedness, except perhaps for a short time, and then only to a limited extent. There may still be oscillations to the right or left, yet the equilibrium is always restored.

This will be further discussed in a subsequent lecture.

LECTURE VII.

DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT IN PARTICULAR RELIGIONS AND IN GROUPS OF KINDRED RELIGIONS.

In last lecture we were engaged in considering what I call the directions of development as distinguished from its stages. Taking the two great families of religion as an illustration, I have endeavoured to show how each religion develops, not harmoniously and symmetrically, but one-sidedly, in conformity with the peculiar character of each family, and how the growth of religion is therefore not a simple but a very complex process, the product of a number of different tributary streams. But as we are far from having exhausted the subject, which could not be adequately treated within our allotted time, we return to it again.

What holds true of the great families of religions applies also to the members of which they consist, both to particular religions and to groups of kindred religions. Let me illustrate this also by a few examples.

As each nation has its peculiar character, so too has each religion, one originally with the nation, but afterwards no longer quite coinciding with it. I know that I am entering a region where imagination often takes great liberties; and although science cannot advance a single step without its aid, the student who gives too free scope to it undoubtedly runs great risks. Hegel was one of the first to attempt to characterise the chief religions. But with all deference to the genius of the great philosopher, we cannot regard his efforts as a success. Thus he calls the Chinese religion that of measure, the Brahmanic that of fancy, and Buddhism that of "being within itself" ("*in-sich-sein*"). The first of these epithets is very vague, and I have never been quite clear as to its drift, while the last two might just as well be reversed. That he should call the Greek religion that of beauty was to be expected, and we may perhaps accept his description of the Persian as that of goodness or light, and of the Jewish as that of sublimity, although the last epithet applies as well or even better to the Egyptian. But what does he mean by calling the Egyptian religion that of enigma, unless he has confounded the Egyptian with the Theban sphinx? And surely the religion of the Syrians cannot fitly be called the religion of suffering. For though the myth and the cult of Tammuz-Adonis play a great part in Western Asia, it must not be forgotten that the

lamentations over his death are succeeded by shouts of exultation upon his resuscitation, and that the same myth is met with in Egypt under the name of Osiris. Eduard von Hartmann, who indeed had ampler data at his command than Hegel, goes more deeply into the subject, and his definitions are more accurate, although — as is pardonable in the German, but not in the philosopher — he has unduly flattered the Germanic religion. Religion owes æsthetic refinement to the Hellenes; the Romans have secularised it; but the Germans, according to Von Hartmann, have given it tragic-ethical depth. This may have been done by the myth of Baldur, which, however, is perhaps not Germanic at all, but due to Christian influence; but neither the myth of Odhin nor that of Thor is specially tragic, nor is that of Freya or Loki ethical. But though Von Hartmann has been on the whole more successful, his short descriptions of the characteristics of the different religions are too much like labels pasted outside, and are not always strictly apposite.

I shall therefore not attempt to follow his example, and to substitute other short characteristic names for those proposed by these philosophers. I prefer to venture upon a short description of the peculiarities which distinguish some of the chief religions from the others. Take, for example, the Egyptian. Even on a superficial acquaintance with that form of religion, it must strike every one from the outset what a

prominent place is given in the religious conceptions of the Egyptians to that of life in all its fulness—as evidenced by the ever-recurring formula, *ānch ut'a seneb:* "life, welfare, health"—life interrupted for a time only by death, ever renewing itself, the Permanent and Imperishable in the midst of all that is changing and transient. And this impression is confirmed by careful study of original sources. From these we learn that it is a mistake to suppose that the pious Egyptians despised this earthly life, and thought of nothing and cared for nothing but to be united some day for ever with Osiris in the fields of Aälu, or to go forth daily in the retinue of the Sun-god as spirits of light. The rich harvest of antiquities yielded by the exploration of the tombs—representations and writings which naturally relate to the life hereafter—made people think that this was the favourite and almost exclusive theme of Egyptian authors and artists. Other discoveries, however, have proved that they appreciated this earthly existence also, and that for this very reason they wished to prolong it in other regions "for millions of years." And therefore their principal sacred document is a Book of the Dead, a collection of texts, against whose magic efficacy the demons of darkness and destruction are powerless. In their tombs, at least during the height of their prosperity, they therefore represented the life of the deceased as a still more beautiful prolongation of his earthly life with all its joys and honours.

They therefore carefully embalmed the body of their dead; for they were not actuated by any mere spiritualistic or sentimental longing for redemption from this miserable existence, but, on the contrary, by hope of its renewal, which impelled them to provide for the possibility of the soul's reunion with the body. For the same reason they strove to make the temples of their gods durable enough to defy the ages, and all who possessed the means, kings and magnates, endeavoured to do the like for their tombs, their everlasting dwellings. For this reason, too, the chief symbol of their gods was not a hewn image, but preferably a living animal, distinguished from all others by special marks, as a pledge of the nearness and eternity of God. The "ever-reviving Ptah" is the name of the most sacred of all these animals, the Hapi-bull of Memphis. The conceptions of the triumph of light over darkness, of fertility and growth over barrenness and decay, the subject of hundreds of ancient myths and of numerous symbols in the ethical religions, were common to the Egyptian with all the nature-religions. But no religion of antiquity has applied these conceptions so emphatically to human life, or elaborated them so much in doctrines and rites; so that, in a single word, we might justly call this religion that of Eternal Life or of Immortality. And those who have traced the importation of these conceptions from Alexandria into the Greek-Roman world, into the later Judaism, and

into the earliest Christianity, must be convinced that Egypt has thus contributed very materially to the general religious development. Assyriology, or the study of Babylonian-Assyrian antiquity, is a younger branch of science than Egyptology. And therefore, however numerous be the sources of the history, customs, and religion of Babylon and Assyria revealed to us by the discoveries of recent years, and however great be the progress already made in the interpretation of these documents, we must here exercise more reserve and caution in drawing conclusions. Of the history of the Babylonian religion we know as yet little more than the outlines. There is no doubt, however, that the idea of the absolute government of God, of a theocracy, formed the foundation of this religion, that it was thus genuinely Semitic, and that, although it had adopted many features of an earlier non-Semitic form of religion, it had independently assimilated them. But such being its general family character, the question is what its special character was, or how it had developed in its own way its fundamental theocratic idea. I do not wish to speak too positively. But I may say that, to the best of my judgment, the Babylonian religion, of which the Assyrian is only an offshoot, is swayed by the root-idea of God's inscrutability, which has sprung up in other specifically Semitic religions too, but is here more fully elaborated. Unfathomable depth and inscrutable

wisdom are expressed in the Babylonian language by the same word, and this word also signifies power and, in a derivative form, an earnest, fervent prayer.[1] The government of God as a supreme power of impenetrable wisdom, of profound and immeasurable knowledge, appears to me to be the main dogma of the Babylonian religious doctrine. By signs and wonders, by oracles and dreams, the gods communicated something of this wisdom to man; and the chief business of the priests and sages was to record them and to interpret them to the laity. The fame of this Babylonian wisdom had soon spread throughout the whole civilised world; but we must not judge of it by the impostures of charlatans, who abused it in order to deceive pious souls at Rome and to extort money from them, a practice which justly made the conservative old Cato exclaim, "*Chaldaeos ne consulito!*" ("Do not consult the Chaldeans!") It need hardly be said that the same religious idea was also familiar to the Israelites. But with them it is overshadowed by another, that of holiness, which arising out of the conception of God's unapproachableness, but developed in an ethical sense, became the distinctive mark of Israel's religion.

The case of the Iranian and Indian religions has clearly shown how two religions belonging to the same family, bearing the same family characteristics, and more closely related to each other than to any others

[1] See Fr. Delitsch, Assyr. Handwörterbuch, voc. *emuḳ* and *le'u*.

of the same group, may develop in totally different directions. Here we have two peoples who lived together longer than the other Aryan nations. This is proved by their languages, which in their oldest forms are little else than two dialects of the same language. They also have a number of myths, ideas, names of gods, institutions, and customs in common. The chief sacrifice of both is the same, the Soma-Haoma sacrifice, however much modified. We might cite many other instances. And yet what a difference in their special characters! I do not allude to the fact that the Indian religious doctrine is expressed in an exuberant mythology, with an almost unlimited number of Devas, while the Iranian, at least in the oldest Zarathushtrism, is conspicuous for its great sobriety, owns seven heavenly spirits only, six of them being merely personified attributes of the one highest spirit, and thus approaches monotheism with S'raosha as the only mediator, apparently ignoring the ancient mythology. For, in the first place, this was the result of a definite reform, from which, moreover, the influence of foreign ideas was not wholly excluded. And in the second place, the theanthropic character of the Iranian religion is not disowned. Various old Aryan gods with a number of myths have also penetrated into the Zarathushtrian system and been adopted in the ritual. It is another difference that I refer to. Among the Iranians, we find that a practical doctrine of morality is hallowed

by religion, that agriculture and a settled life are religious duties, that zeal and industry, and even wealth acquired by honest labour, are all regarded as the foremost of virtues, whilst recluses and ascetics, though not unknown, are little esteemed. Among the Indians, on the contrary, ascetic contemplation, diverging ever further from practical life and withdrawing from ordinary human duties, although among the Brahmans subject to certain limitations, is held up as the highest rule of life among the Yogins, Jainas, and Bauddhas. The Iranian hopes for a life of bliss in communion with Ahura Mazda, and dreams of a future when all the creations of Angra Mainyu, the Evil One, which mar the good creation of Mazda, will be destroyed; but of this consummation this earth will be the scene, and as long as he sojourns here below, he takes pleasure in life and appreciates the many blessings of this imperfect existence. To the Indian this existence becomes more and more of a burden, the cause of all misery, from which he can only be released by being merged in the deity or by total annihilation. The Iranian worshipper of Mazda is kept down to the earth by his religion: he follows a golden middle course, the carefully levelled path of decorum and social virtue; he believes that the whole drama of the world will be played out within twelve thousand years; and it is only when he returns to his old myths and deities that his imagination once more, though but timidly,

extends her wings. The imagination of the Hindu is entirely unfettered; he reckons not by thousands of years, but by thousands of ages; the safety of a middle course is not revealed to him; at one time he mounts the dizziest heights of the boldest speculation, and loses himself in a spiritualism which renders him insensible to everything else; and then sinks, by a natural reaction, into the mire of the grossest and most revolting sensuality, which he hardly takes the trouble to veil beneath a paltry mysticism. It is not our purpose to seek for the cause of this phenomenon, this sharp contrast; I should merely have to repeat what I have said elsewhere on the subject (in my 'History of Religion in Antiquity'). I need only remark that this contrast is not exclusively, or even chiefly, to be attributed to foreign influence and external circumstances, but also arises from the character of the peoples themselves. The question which concerns us here is, what the two religions have contributed to the general development of religion.

In order to answer this question let me call your attention to the character of Zarathushtrism. Having sprung from the ancient general antithesis of light and darkness, life and death, it has grown into the antithesis of good and evil, of the pure and the impure. This is, therefore, an ethical antithesis, but not in the sense of coinciding with that between this side of the grave and the other, between the earthly and the heavenly,

between the natural and the spiritual. On the contrary, the evil in nature and the world of man, physical and moral, is transient; it prevails in the lower dominions of the Father of Lies, and exercises a certain power, though for a time only, over this earthly dwelling-place. It is destined to be some day utterly swept away. The Zarathushtrian doctrine is the first serious attempt to conform material interests and duties with the spiritual needs and longings of mankind, and to reconcile the temporal with the eternal, by regarding the former as reflecting, and preparing for, the latter. The religious root-idea of Zarathushtrism, when first distinctly expressed, which, as history shows, has not remained fruitless, is that the life of the pious is a sacred labour and struggle, constantly directed against the evil and the impure in what we are wont to distinguish as the world of nature and that of spirit, in order that both may at last be thoroughly purified—in short, that every pious man, according to his ability, is a fellow-worker with God.

India spurns the earthly and the perishable in order to exalt herself unfettered to higher spheres. She does not attempt to reconcile God and the world, but explains the world as mere show and illusion. Her religion is a grand but unsuccessful attempt to grasp by force, as if it were her prey, the Infinite, the Unlimited, the Immeasurable. But just through its contempt for all reality, through its exaggerated idealism,

Brahmanism, at first so exclusive, and limited to three privileged classes, threw open, in its later development as Buddhism, the way of salvation to all who fulfilled the conditions of its attainment and of their release from all finite bonds. This religion was thus the first to rise to the idea of a redemption, a salvation, not destined for particular classes or a single people, but for all men as men; and, though not as yet with full consciousness, it was the first to feel something of the unity of mankind in its aspirations for the Infinite, long before this idea had occurred to the minds of the Greek philosophers or was preached in the Gospel as a positive doctrine. From the bosom of Brahmanism was born the first universalistic religion, the first religion which had the ambition to embrace all men. And whatever we may think of its doctrine of redemption, the fact that this idea was grasped, professed, and realised in one way or another, is one of the greatest turning-points and most important epochs in the history of religious development.

Although not so closely related as the Indians to the Persians, there is a strong affinity between the Greeks and Romans, who, along with Israel, have justly been called our spiritual ancestors, because we have inherited the treasures of their high civilisation. Moreover, these sister nations were soon historically associated in ever closer and more living contact, so that it is impossible to understand the one, and the

Roman in particular, without a knowledge of the other. This requires no proof, as every one knows what a mighty and commanding influence Greek civilisation, art, letters, and philosophy exerted on the Roman culture, so that the latter is really a continuation of the former, and may be called the Greek-Roman. This was effected through the medium of the Etrurians, the first teachers of the Romans, and themselves, as appears from their art and their religion, the disciples and successors of the Greeks. Then followed the intercourse with Magna Græcia, the southern part of the Italian peninsula, where Greek culture had been established and diffused; and lastly, the conquest of Hellas, which brought the conquering and physically dominant people more and more into subjection to the spiritual supremacy of their subjects.

And yet what a world-wide difference there is in character, and therefore in religious development too, between these two nations, so closely connected by lineage and by intercourse! The Greeks have done more for the development of religion than is commonly supposed, and it is difficult to sum it all up in a few words. Their religion has been called that of beauty, of æsthetic refinement, and justly so. We naturally first think of their rare artistic endowments, of the genius of their sculptors and architects. While the sculptors in their masterpieces have succeeded in representing ideal beauty in the charm, the vigour, and the sublim-

ity of their ideals of gods, and at the same time delineating purity, earnestness, wisdom, and indeed all the moral attributes of the Olympians, in the expression of their features, the architects built them appropriate dwellings, stately and elegant, but simple and sober in style, and therefore really grander and more impressive than the huge Egyptian and Babylonian shrines. But we also remember their poets and authors, who, like Homer, transformed the ancient nature-myths into attractive poetry; or, like the tragic poets in their dramas, gave concrete form to the profoundest religious thoughts in suffering heroes, hallowed by their suffering; or, like Plato, recorded in immortal works their speculations on the highest theme that can occupy the human mind, the origin and the essence of being, yet without sacrificing the depth and wealth of their subjects to beauty of form. How much of all this they borrowed from the East we need not now determine. But if they began by anxiously copying foreign models in their plastic art, we need only observe how in course of time they perfected them, and transformed them into ideal human figures, in order that we may understand what unique artists they were. And the same holds true of their intellectual creations. I need not repeat what I have already said as to the purification to which their tragedians and philosophers subjected their mythology. But let me merely remind you of their three principal gods, represented by Homer as still closely united, who

successively become representatives of different periods in the history of the Hellenic religion—Zeus, Apollo, and Athêna. Zeus, in spite of his exalted position, in spite of the supremacy and the spiritual attributes assigned to him, is still distinctly a nature-god, the celestial god of thunder and of rain. Apollo, whose original physical significance is still recognisable, but who is now much more detached from nature, is still the revealer of the will of the Highest and the averter of disaster and pestilence, but is, above all, the god who embodies all the wealth of the Greek spiritual life of the period, the god of poetry, music, and song, of wisdom and self-knowledge, the brother of the Muses, and at the same time the god of redemption and reconciliation, the maintainer of peace among all Hellenes, preeminently the national god, but highly revered by foreigners also. And lastly Athêna, the austere virgin, whose luminous character is entirely transferred to the domain of the mind, became the true celestial representative of all that the intellectual capital of the ancient world revered and aspired to as the loftiest of aims, so that we can only conjecture the natural phenomenon of which she was once the personification. There is no doubt that the Greeks were the first to conceive, as an example to all ages, the divine as the eternally beautiful, to create an ideal embodiment for spiritual ideals, and thus to reconcile religion with art, the sacred with the æsthetic.

But their signal services to the history of religious development are by no means exhausted. A nation of artists and poets, the Greek people is no less rich in philosophers and thinkers. The official representatives of religious development might regard them with suspicion and denounce them, popular leaders might stir up the mob against them, a poet abhorring innovation might deride them in his comedies, yet opposition, persecution, and derision could not prevent the Greek philosophers from taking even religion and the divine as subjects for their contemplation; and in so doing they discovered eternal truths, and expressed ideas, which only obtained general recognition at a much later period, when the Gospel had caused its light to shine. If we call the Hellenes a people of artists and poets, we must in justice add that they were a people of thinkers. And with the religious element they united the intellectual as well as the æsthetic; they not only hallowed art by religion, as had been done by other nations, but they glorified religion by the highest art, the most perfect of its kind, and, above all, in religion too they sought after truth.

These endowments, these æsthetic and philosophic efforts, have determined the character of their religion, a character which distinctly differentiates it from all others, and from the Roman in particular. As it is pre-eminently an aristocratic religion, so, too, it was overthrown by the democracy. Nowhere in antiquity,

except perhaps in India, and there in a very different way, does the individual element so strikingly assert its superiority to the common and traditional; nowhere has so illustrious a series of great minds exerted such dominant influence on the development of religion. Nowhere does sacerdotal power recede so far into the background; and where the priests have any real and abiding power, they only obtain it by participating to the utmost of their ability in the spiritual progress of their age, and by appropriating its results. This is the religion of humanity in its noblest sense.

With the Romans, on the contrary, it is not the personal, individual element, but society that predominates. The number of their own gods who have a fixed character and a definite personality is extremely limited, and their characters are never so sharply defined as those of the Greek gods. Most of the ideas about higher beings which they have formed for themselves are little else than abstractions conceived as spirits, such as virtues, inclinations, operations, in which the lingering traces of Animism are unmistakable, as in Aius Locutius, the genius of the warning voice, and in Æsculanus and Argentinus, the tutelary spirits of copper and silver coins, besides many others. Their mythology is remarkably poor. Most of the great gods who act a part in it are borrowed from the Greeks or from Asia Minor, sometimes retaining their non-Latin names, plastic representations, and foreign

ritual, sometimes blended with native gods or goddesses, and sometimes greatly modified and shorn of their original character and functions, as will be obvious from a comparison of Mercury with Hermês, or of Minerva with Athêna, and from other cases. The Romans always felt a certain dread of making the divine powers too much like men; it was only with hesitation and from afar that they followed the anthropomorphism of the Hellenes. The qualities which distinguished them, and enabled them to found a mighty empire (*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!*), and by their laws to govern, not only the peoples of antiquity, but later generations also, long after the downfall of their empire—qualities which Mommsen characterises as a profound feeling of the general in the particular, as the dedication and sacrifice of the individual to society—these qualities sway their religion also. They possess no sportive imagination, no poetic sublimity, no philosophic depth, no rich variety, but their concern is for the practical, the necessary, all methodically arranged in grey uniformity. But in its firmly established yet ever spreading and developing hierarchy, the Roman religion exhibited the wonderful power of a religious community unswerving in its fidelity to tradition, whence Christianity derived a model for its first great organisation which has defied the ages.

Let me remind you in passing that the two direc-

tions we have contrasted, represented by these Aryan peoples, are not unfrequently found in contact among the same people, either as two rival religions, or simply as two conflicting views of life within the pale of the same religion. Among the Chinese, for example, the former is the case. There we find the somewhat sober Confucianism, the religion of the wise Kong, who in the sixth century before our era reformed the then existing imperial cult, a religion consisting mainly in the worship of spirits, especially of deceased ancestors, and in the observance of an elaborate morality, adapted to practice, and applied to private, social, and political life. And beside it we find Tao-ism, the religion whose adherents appeal to Lao-tse, Kong-tse's elder contemporary, with his bold, profound, and often gloomy speculations, his love of solitude and of escape from the duties of practical life, his unbounded belief in miracles — a religion which, among an undeveloped people, incapable of following the lofty flight of the Master, degenerated into dreary superstition, a combination of the ancient mythology with a poor-spirited morality and the silliest sorceries. And in order to illustrate how the two tendencies above mentioned may manifest themselves side by side in the same religion, I need only refer you to your own experience of what goes on in the Christian world around you, and what the history of Christianity teaches. On the one hand

we find a world-despising idealism, a world-shunning piety, and a world-forsaking monastic and hermit life, which has several features in common with the Indian. On the other hand we find an attempt to combine the demands of the religious life with those of the practical, to cherish the spiritual without abandoning the earthly—an attempt which, if carried to an extreme, is apt, consciously or unconsciously, to convert religion into a mere homely morality, but which, rightly understood, may pave the way for a solution of the great question of life, the reconciliation of the human and divine, of the finite and infinite in man.

But we must not discuss this further at present. The illustrations I have sketched suffice to show that development, as I have already said, is a very complex phenomenon, that it does not proceed in a straight line, or with perfect regularity, but that now one side, now another, of religious thought and life is specially cultivated, so that each religion, each sect, each tendency contributes its share to the general development. But they cannot do this, they can yield no fruit for this purpose, when they remain isolated and miss their mark owing to their extravagant bias. A reaction indeed generally sets in. But this reaction is usually a violent revolution, a revulsion to the opposite extreme. The extravagant spiritualism of India, which tried to rise above all sensuousness, and to crush out all human

feelings, even the noblest passions and the purest affections, in order that man may become a spirit, absolutely unfettered, like the Most High, inevitably led to the hideous excesses and revolting orgies of the Śakti sects, and to the doctrine and practice of the most brutish naturalism. Every one knows what became of the chastity, the voluntary poverty, and the world-abandonment of many monastic orders, and how often an extravagant Mysticism (as distinct from a wholesome Mysticism) dragged them down from the ethereal heights of the purely divine, to which Icarus-like they had tried to soar, to the slough of the grossest sensuality. It is clear, therefore, that reaction, especially when revolutionary in character, does not necessarily conduce to progress, but, when carried to an extravagant pitch, fatally hinders it. It has been thought by some that a law of development is discoverable here —a "law of progress by reaction," or, as a recent American writer, Samuel Johnson,[1] expresses it, *the law of self-recovery by reaction*, a law of which Guizot, more practically than scientifically, has said that it prevents false ideas and institutions from being carried so far as their principles would logically warrant. I once formulated the law myself as follows: "Development, including that of religion, always takes place in the form of a consistent elaboration and ap-

[1] Oriental Religions in their relation to Universal Religion, i. 18 *seq.*; see also 'Theol. Tijdschrift,' viii., 1874, 256 *seq.*

plication of a definite tendency, which, being itself a reaction from the views prevalent in the preceding period, leads to another similar reaction, and thus, through its very one-sidedness, to progress." Even in this form it no longer quite satisfies me. But that it contains a great and unmistakable truth is apparent from what has just been said. Development is the product of different streams, each pursuing its own course to the uttermost, provided they ultimately converge, but not if they are suddenly diverted into totally different directions. *Equilibrium* must be restored. If your boat heels over and threatens to capsize, you would not try to restore its equilibrium and avert the danger by suddenly and nervously shifting the whole weight to the opposite side. Yet this is just what reaction generally does. All reaction, even when it cloaks itself under the name of anti-revolutionary but really is a mere repristination, is in its essence revolutionary. It is useful as a warning, just as a fever is salutary as the indication of a disease. It may have the effect of opening the eyes of the wise and prudent, of the deeper thinkers, the qualified physicians of mankind, to the necessity for remedial measures and for restoration of the lost equilibrium. But reaction can do no more. It cannot of itself bring relief, for it usually misjudges all that is good and true in the system opposed to it. Left to itself, it can only lead from bad to worse. For it is, in fact, a symptom of disease

which calls for cure, and at most it affords an indication of the way to cure it and the remedies to be applied.

Now the cure can only be effected by reconciliation, by which the equilibrium is restored, or (to use an apter image) by which tendencies, apparently antagonistic and incompatible owing to their one-sidedness, are merged in harmonious co-operation. But this combination will still of course be incomplete, as everything human is imperfect, and will at first be rather an aspiration, an ideal, to be but slowly realised; yet it will at least be a step in the right direction. The bond which unites what was formerly separate stands higher on that account. For it teaches us to value as equally legitimate—nay, as necessary for religious life and thought—those elements in each tendency which the opposite tendency slights or misjudges, and it thus preserves whatever is good in each, and renders it conducive to the further development of religion. The famous triology of Hegel, *thesis, antithesis, synthesis,* may perhaps rather be called an *a priori* speculation applied to history than a well-founded hypothesis derived from it, and at all events does not apply invariably to the development of mankind; but it is really more complete, and therefore more appropriate, than the law of *self-recovery by reaction.* Restoration and progress are not the results of antithesis, for antithesis makes us fall from one extreme into the other;

but they are produced solely by synthesis, whether this process be employed advisedly or take place involuntarily by the blunting of opposing forces brought into collision. If, therefore, there be any such law at all, we prefer to call it the law of progress by synthesis or reconciliation. But we shall see afterwards that it is only one phase, a single manifestation, of the main law that governs all development, including that of religion.

Call this phenomenon what we please, it is a fact, and not a mere freak of fancy or the offspring of speculation. When two streams of development, hitherto running their own separate courses, meet and unite, there arises a higher form of religion, or, as we should call it in natural life, a new and richer variety, the product of a crossing. An early example of this is the religion of Zarathushtra. It still belongs undoubtedly to the theanthropic forms of religion, but is much more strongly tinctured with theocratic elements than others, such as the Indian. This has long been felt; and traces of Semitic influence more particularly have been sought for. But of this no proof based on historic records can be adduced. The origins of the Zarathushtrian reformation are too much shrouded in obscurity; and the hypothesis that it took place at a comparatively recent period, and that its new doctrine was borrowed from the Greek philosophy, must be regarded as a failure. We cannot tell what historical circum-

stances gave it an impulse, or whence the spirit proceeded that transformed the ancient Iranian Daêva cult into the mainly ethical worship of Ahura. But it is certain that Zarathushtrism is based upon a reconciliation, not merely, as we have said, between the demands of the practical and the heavenly, but also, and chiefly, between the traditional dualistic-theanthropic ideas and the theocratic monism so clearly expressed in the exaltation of Mazda Ahura, the creator of heaven and earth, far above his satellites, and in the almost pure monotheistic doctrine of the earliest records.

Judaism forms another example. It is well known that a great difference exists between the as yet pure theocratic doctrine of Mosaism before the Captivity and the later Jewish doctrine, mingled with a variety of theanthropic ideas. These changes, particularly the elaborated doctrine of angels and devils, and notably the eschatology, which were unknown to ancient Israel, have hitherto been ascribed to the intercourse of the people with the Persians. Scholars are now more inclined to attribute these differences to spontaneous native development. I am convinced, however, that the new doctrines were borrowed, but rather from the Chaldæans or the Babylonians than from the Iranians. But leaving this an open question, we know for certain that there are here two different streams, though rising within the bosom of the same nation, which meet and

unite. And the consequence is that Judaism casts off the fetters of particularism, that it is transformed from a purely national into an almost universalistic—that is, a generally human—religion, and that it thus paves the way for Christianity.

From a different direction the way was paved by the Greek-Roman religion. The whole history of the Roman religion is that of a constant and systematic importation of Greek ideas and usages into the firmly established edifice of the Roman cult. But the Greek religion itself was by no means unmixed. Its form, as reflected in the rich literature of that most gifted of the peoples of antiquity, was due to contact with the East. Theanthropic by descent and in character, it bears unmistakable traces of the influence of theocratic ideas. It would be a most important and attractive, though a very difficult task, to determine how much the Greek religion owed to the peoples of Asia Minor with whom the Hellenes associated, and how much mediately or immediately to the Semites. But this we cannot at present attempt. I shall not even venture to state the opinion I have formed on this subject, as I should require to add a detailed explanation of the grounds on which it rests. I should not, however, go so far as to maintain, like some scholars of repute, that the result would show how very little that was originally Greek was retained in the Greek religion, and how by far the greater and more important part was derived

from the East, and specially from the Semites, though thoroughly assimilated by the Greeks, modified by their spirit and their needs, and, above all, glorified by their artistic genius. But even if we assume nothing for the present beyond what is admitted by all impartial inquirers, and even if we hold nothing as proved beyond the foreign elements in the myths of Hêraklês, of Europa, of Pygmalion, in the service of the Cretenzian Zeus, of the Cabires of Samothrace, of Apollo, Dionysos, and Aphroditê, in the Mysteries, in the Pythagorean and the Stoic philosophy, yet it cannot be denied that we discern here for the first time the meeting and union of East and West, that the Hellenic religion never could have attained its full development, and that Greek religious thought could never have yielded the material out of which the Christian dogmatic wove her first garment, unless from a very early period the theanthropic views had been modified by the theocratic, and unless oriental mysticism had been wedded to Greek rationalism.

In Christianity this confluence of the two great streams of development is consummated. While Buddhism has reached the extreme limit in the theanthropic direction, and all the divine unites in the Illuminated, but soon again to degenerate into a complex mythology and abject superstition, and while Islâm in its almost fatalistic Monotheism represents the extremest theocracy, and at the same time falls

back to a great extent into the old particularism, Christianity unites the two opposite doctrines of transcendency and immanency by its ethical conception of the Fatherhood of God, which embraces both the exaltation of God above man and man's relationship with God. Christianity is the most many-sided of all religions and families of religion, and it thus possesses an adaptability, or elasticity as it has been called, which explains its great wealth and variety of forms. In more than one respect, and more than any other creed, it is the religion of reconciliation; and in this sense also that it combines those apparently irreconcilable elements of religious life which are separately represented and singly developed in other religions and in other periods of greater or less duration. For it unites other elements also besides the opposite doctrines of theocracy and theanthropism. In its proclamation of the kingdom of God, which exists not only in the future, or exclusively in heaven, but within ourselves, and which must also be realised upon earth, and in its beautiful doctrine of the communion of saints and the brotherhood of all men and their equality before God, it aims at the closest union of all men, whatever be their origin, language, or colour; but it leaves the individual perfectly free, by declaring the unity of the spirit to be the sole bond of communion, and every man to be solely responsible to his own conscience —far different from Buddhism, which crushes out all

individuality, inasmuch as it abolishes personality and imposes upon every votary passive obedience to the powers above him. Christianity neither is hostile to the world nor mingles with it, and has therefore neither an optimistic nor a pessimistic bias; it values and commends the utmost self-denial, and renunciation of everything for a pious object, but it condemns aimless self-abnegation, fasting, and abstinence for their own sake, as if they were meritorious in themselves. It contrasts the austere prophet of repentance, in his raiment of camel's hair, who ate nothing but what the desert afforded, with the far greater "Son of Man, who came eating and drinking," the kindly Master who sat at feasts and marriages with Pharisees and publicans, with friends and disciples. It proclaims itself as the light of the world, the salt of the earth, pervading and hallowing everything by the leaven of its spirit.

I do not maintain that the reconciliation of these antinomies, the confluence of these divergent tendencies, has been fully accomplished in historic Christianity. We still often find them there, side by side, or in conflict; sometimes one, sometimes another, religious idea is cultivated with special preference, embodied in different churches and sects, and advocated by biassed adherents. But we also find — and this distinguishes it from all other ethical religions, even the most universalistic of which have indeed but one norm of religious life — we also find within the pale

of Christianity all the different tendencies, and all appealing with some right to the same authority.

I am therefore far from saying that the reconciliation of all the religious differences which have hitherto divided mankind has been accomplished. This work has been carried on in the Christian world for nearly nineteen centuries, partly unconsciously, partly designedly; but although it has yielded fruit, it is far from being completed. The whole history of religion, externally viewed, is the history of a succession of a great variety of one-sided forms of religion, in which the religious elements are differently mingled, and which vie with each other, spring up, flourish, and perish, or at least cease to grow. The history of Christianity is the continuation of that earlier history, but in a more perfect, many-sided, and comprehensive form. I simply mean that, if we take the trouble to penetrate to the kernel of the Gospel, in which all the varieties of Christian life originate, we shall there find the solution of these conflicts in its germ and principle. I do not say this from partiality to the religion which I myself profess. Were I to express my full religious conviction, I should confess that true religion, the religion of humanity, has been revealed in Christ, a religion which creates ever new and higher forms, yet ever defective because they are human, and which thus develops more and more in and through humanity. But this is a matter of faith, and I must here

maintain my purely scientific and impartial position. But even from this point of view, and as the result of historic and philosophic investigation, I maintain that the appearance of Christianity inaugurated an entirely new epoch in the development of religion; that all the streams of the religious life of man, once separate, unite in it; and that religious development will henceforth consist in an ever higher realisation of the principles of that religion.

LECTURE VIII.

LAWS OF DEVELOPMENT.

I HAVE several times alluded in passing to the laws of development. Do such laws exist? And if we must assume that they do, are we in a position to discover them with the means at our command? In other words, do they lie within the scope of human science?

More than twenty years ago I answered this question unhesitatingly in the affirmative. In the 'Theologisch Tijdschrift' of 1874 I wrote an article on "The Laws of the Development of Religion," which attracted attention at the time, even beyond Holland, and was assented to by many, but impugned by others. It was a first attempt to deduce from the religious phenomena, not a single such law—which had already been tried by others—but a complete system of laws of development. Was this too bold or rash, or was it a proof of the presumption of our still youthful science? But, unless science

is to stand still, we must now and then grapple with difficult questions, and at least try to answer them. If the answer is unsatisfactory it may serve as a stimulus to further research, and it need not make us despair of ultimately finding the true solution. Much of what I then wrote I should now formulate otherwise, and I have indeed several times modified my university lectures on the subject accordingly. And I must now admit that the title of the article was not quite accurate. I should not have said "Laws of the Development of Religion," but "Laws of Development in their Application to Religion." For in point of fact I only meant even then to maintain that the laws which govern the development of the human mind hold true of religion also, though their application may differ in form and in details. But I still adhere to the article as a whole, and have not altered my opinion in point of principle. If such laws—or call them the rules, forms, necessary conditions, if you will, by which spiritual development is bound—did not exist, and if we were unable to form some idea of them corresponding with reality, it would be better to give up the science of religion altogether as a fond illusion. We should not even be entitled to speak of development at all, for this idea necessarily involves that of rules and laws.

There is a school of historians of merited repute who have conducted historical research into new paths, and

who above all insist upon a careful and thorough examination of the original sources—and in this they have our full sympathy—but who will not hear of such a thing as historical laws. None of those propounded as such, as they declare, has obtained general recognition; the path often followed by history is not necessarily a law which it must always follow; it is impossible here to speak of natural laws, like the law of gravitation; and even if we were to assume that such laws exist and operate, it would fall beyond our powers of thought to determine them. My old friend and colleague, the late Professor Acquoy, an authority of the highest rank among the historians of Christianity, could not speak without a smile of what he called, with a kind of ironical respect, the higher kinds of historical writing, and particularly of what he termed nomological hierography. No serious historian need trouble himself with the question whether there is a law in accordance with which history grows. "Let the philosopher study this question *if he pleases.*" Well, we do please to examine the question, although we do not claim the distinction of being philosophers. Or rather we must do so whether we please or not, because it is the task and the duty of science. If the historian is content with a genetic description of history, and thus excludes his department of knowledge from the sphere of science properly so called, he is free to do so; his limitation is perhaps conducive to the accuracy and

trustworthiness of his results. But although we are grateful to him for the results, and admit that they must be carefully reckoned with, we decline to rest satisfied with them, and we deem it our duty further to inquire what they teach us concerning the development of the human mind in different directions.

Let us, however, distinctly understand each other. The science of religion is not a natural but a mental science, and therefore there is no question here about natural laws. The mechanical element is entirely excluded. I do not maintain that the phenomena of history, and in particular of the history of religion, recur with the same regularity as day and night, summer and winter. The attempts that have been made to prove this by the statistics of marriages, suicides, cases of insanity, and crimes within a given space of time, I regard as utter failures. And I am just as far from maintaining, for example, as is sometimes done, that a system of protection is always the greatest enemy of progress. It can indeed be proved that it has often injured the prosperity of nations, hampered their intercourse, and prevented their industry from taking higher flights; and we are entitled to assume that this will always be the case *under the same circumstances.* But there may be conditions in which it is of great service in fostering a budding industry, and in averting the fate of the consequences of an unequal struggle, unfair competition, and unworthy practices.

This holds true in the sphere of religion also. There also unwarrantable conclusions have been drawn from frequently recurring phenomena. Priests and theologians have often opposed salutary reforms; and many persons, observing this, have inferred that theology is injurious to religion, and that a priesthood is always an evil. It has not unfrequently turned out that what was at first opposed by the authorities in State and Church as false doctrine and detestable heresy really represented a truth long misunderstood, and that, so far from contaminating religious life, it elevated and refined it; but we may admit this, without regarding it as a law, as a well-known ecclesiastical historian does, that heretics are always right. Purity and strictness of morals sometimes seem to decline with the increase of devoutness of a certain kind—but only apparently, for if there is any relation here of cause and effect, the very reverse would be the case—yet this phenomenon, imperfectly observed, has been accepted by several self-styled philosophers as a sufficient ground for assuming that religion is pernicious to moral life. It would be easy to multiply examples. But it is just as easy to see that there is really no question of laws in the case. This is mere doctrinarianism, injurious both to scientific research and to practical life.

Nor, above all, must it be forgotten that laws of history are quite a different thing from laws of development. Let us admit that the former, assuming them

to exist and operate, cannot be discovered by us; that we have no right to say that what has happened hundreds or thousands of times in a particular way must always happen in precisely the same way; that we cannot determine by fixed laws what must happen, because it does not depend solely on conditions that we can ascertain, but also on the incalculable element of individuality, of the personal free-will of each individual; and that all this accordingly lies beyond our comprehension and transcends our powers of thought. But no intelligent person will deny that the best dispositions require to be guided with discretion, formed and cultivated, and to be provided with a sphere of action wide enough to enable them to assert themselves, and that this is a law of development. And indeed the famous saying, to the effect that the signs of the times are no less certain than the signs of heaven, already implies that it is not chance or caprice, but God that governs mankind by rational laws—that is, by laws perceptible to our reason. And the science of religion, unless it is to forfeit its rank as a science, must try to trace them; it must account for the laws which are in force in this domain also; it must determine the conditions to which the development of religion is subject, and define what religious development really is. The history of religion is a very different thing from an Old Curiosity Shop. It is totally different from

some mere collection of antiquities skilfully and tastefully arranged; it is the exposition of the religious life of man, and is therefore a fit subject for philosophic investigation. Has it already yielded definite results? Have we already discovered such laws? I formerly gave an affirmative answer to this question, and I will not now disown it. But permit me for the present to treat the matter as an open question, and to speak less positively. We are not now attempting to construct a system, but only to sketch an introduction to the science of religion. And in doing so we need not anxiously conceal our conviction of what has been already discovered, but we must keep in view our main task of marking out the route we have to follow in order to make discoveries. And in order to make the slightest progress in any science whatever, we require what has been rightly called a working hypothesis. I shall therefore for the present submit to you the laws of development, which have been greeted with so much distrust, merely as indispensable working hypotheses. Anthropological and historical observations present various problems, of which we must not omit to attempt a solution. It is necessary to look such problems in the face. The mere fact of knowing them, and especially of describing them accurately, has already yielded good results. We shall therefore endeavour to do this, but not without offering some suggestions for their solution.

The first question that arises is, What influence development in other domains has exerted on that of religion? That such influence exists requires no proof. That it is inevitable results from the mere fact that the human mind, however different its operations, is really one; and we are of course only speaking here of mental development, and not of the physical development of man as a mere animal. Now, even when the latter is not in question, a distinction is sometimes made between material and mental, or intellectual, æsthetic, and moral, development—between progress in industry and temporal welfare, which is termed material, and progress in science, philosophy, art, and morals, which is termed mental. But there is no ground for this distinction, or at least it is inaccurate. All genuine development is mental, and even the development which is called material is simply that of the human mind applied to material aims, and revealing itself in a variety of inventions which facilitate intercourse, which gladden life, and bring its enjoyments within the reach of ever-increasing numbers. They bear testimony to the growing supremacy of the human mind over physical nature. They must not, therefore, be excluded from our present inquiry. For religion also must experience the influence of such progress, though, of course, it is less intimately connected with it than with philosophical and ethical progress. All these kinds of human development may be embraced

in the word civilisation, understood in its widest sense, so that the question may also be put thus: What influence does civilisation exert upon the development of religion?

The answer which thousands upon thousands have given and still give to this question is decidedly unfavourable. All civilisation, they say, whether it increases the enjoyment of life by making matter more and more subservient to it, or delights the eye and the ear by the creations of the fine arts or music, or tries to regulate everything by rational thought, or proposes to set up a doctrine of morality apart from divine doctrine, is injurious to religion, corrupts and deteriorates it, impedes its development, is even hostile to it, and, if allowed free scope, would speedily put an end to it altogether. This view is perfectly natural and intelligible. It arises from two different causes. In the first place, it is based upon the misuse made of advanced civilisation, and upon the biassed views which lead it to assume a hostile attitude to religion. It does not escape pious people that the enhancement of the enjoyments of life, and the increasing ease of sharing in them, often lead to luxury and laxity, and, if not theoretically, at least practically, to materialism; that when there is a mania for art, and people care for nothing else, value nothing else, and are entirely engrossed with it, the seriousness of life suffers, and we lose our sense of the good and the true. They hear

science—not true science, which is modest, and which, as it advances, sees more and more distinctly that, although it knows more than formerly, there still remains just as much that it does not know—they hear superficial science, which appropriates and parades the but half-understood results of the investigations of others, loudly proclaiming that religion is played out, that faith is imagination, and that science alone can solve all the riddles of life. They see other people giving up their religion in order to replace it by a certain kind of philosophy, or by what they call an independent doctrine of morality. And fearing they will altogether lose their religion, the most cherished inheritance of their fathers, *Vindicamus haereditatem patrum nostrorum!* they exclaim, and turn away in disgust from a civilisation which in their judgment can only proceed from the Evil One.

The other cause is to be found in themselves, in their own short-sightedness. They do not see that the form of religion in which they have been brought up, and to which they are with heart and soul attached, is but one of the forms of religion, and that religion itself is entirely independent of such forms; that forms may change and vary without sacrificing the eternal ideas and the immortal aspirations which constitute the essence of religion. They feel, rather than understand, that their form of religion, which they identify with religion itself, no longer accords

with the present stage of civilisation, but with an older stage, and rests upon a very different view of life and the world from that which has now become prevalent among the more enlightened. They accordingly withdraw anxiously from the influence of everything which they think may undermine the sole genuine manifestation of divine truth.

The history of peoples and religions testifies to the wide diffusion of such views. They show themselves in the contempt and renunciation of the world inculcated by austere prophets of repentance, monks and hermits, by pietistic sects and churches, by the Chinese Tao-sse, Indian Yatis, Yogins, Nirgranthikas, S'ramanas, Bhikshus, or whatever else be their names, by Essenes, Therapeutics, Heraclists, by the rival orders of mediæval monks, by Quakers and Moravians, and by various kindred religionists of modern times. They showed themselves in a less harmless way in the persecution of Anaxagoras the philosopher, and Phidias the sculptor, the friends of Pericles, in the cup of poison of Socrates, in the martyr's stake of Giordano Bruno, and in all the bloody horrors perpetrated by the defenders of threatened forms of religion, whereby they unconsciously displayed their want of faith.

An important article on the Nomad Ideal of the Old Testament has recently been published by Professor Karl Budde of Strassburg in the 'Preussische Jahrbücher.' This is the ideal of the strict Yahve-worship-

pers, who did their utmost to maintain that oldest and rudest form of their religion to which they were strongly attached. Glimpses of this are still distinctly obtained here and there in the Old Testament. But the system is nowhere carried to such an extreme as by Jehonadab the Kenite, the son of Rechab, and founder of the sect of the Rechabites, who gave his countenance to Jehu when the latter, in Yahve's name, slew the sons of Ahab and the servants of Ba'al. In order to preserve the purity of their religion the Rechabites dwelt in tents, forbade agriculture, and abstained from wine, not from asceticism, but because the culture of the vine was associated with the worship of Ba'al. In this case we have an example of the renunciation of certain kinds of social life as endangering a specific form of religion, combined with a ruthless extirpation of those who deviated from that form. In the name of religion a pastoral life is in this case just as strongly inculcated as the Zarathushtrian Iranians inculcated agriculture as the only kind of occupation pleasing to Ahura Mazda. But what lesson does this teach? That so obstinate an opposition to the march of civilisation is unfavourable to the development of religion. It may, indeed, ensure a certain degree of purity for a definite form of religion, but it condemns it to stagnation. We may respect the stedfastness of the stern devotees of the wilderness, who renounced all the comforts and enjoyments of settled life in order that they might con-

tinue to worship the god of their fathers in the ancient manner. But we must concur with Professor Budde in the answer he gives to the question, whether it would have benefited religion if Israel had adopted the nomad ideal of Jehonadab, ben-Rechab. "Certainly not," he says. "A pure Yahvism would indeed thus have been established, but only by crushing out all the germs and principles of a higher development—the Yahvism of a bygone type, from which we should recoil in horror if we met with it in actual life." It was by others that Yahvism was developed and enriched, yet without the least abatement of its purity. It was by the great prophets of the eighth and following centuries, two of the earliest of whom, Hosea and Isaiah, still start from the nomad ideal, but who had learned to see in Yahve the Lord of their country, whose glorious gifts men may unhesitatingly enjoy as his blessings.

From what has been said we conclude that to dissever religion from all other human development, to withdraw it entirely from the influence of civilisation, may serve to uphold a specific form of religion which is no longer in accordance with the altered conditions of civilisation, but inevitably dooms it to stagnation. People are quite entitled to defend their religion against the enervating effects of luxury, against the sensuous charms of art, against the rationalism of a one-sided science, against the scepticism of philosophy, and against the usurpations of an independent doctrine of morals;

and by absolute repudiation of all these they may effectually gain their object. But this is a radical measure which deprives religion of all the advantages its development might gain from a true and healthy civilisation. This is what the Germans proverbially call "emptying out the bath and the child along with it." The wise spiritual leaders of Israel and other nations have perhaps felt rather than perceived this, but they acted with tact and discretion in modifying their religious ideas and aims in conformity with the altered views of life and the world called forth by the advance of civilisation. For, indeed, religion cannot but gain by welcoming the influences of refinement of manners, of elevation of moral insight, of purification of artistic taste, of the light of science, and of the bold speculations of philosophy. All development, including that of religion, takes place by means of assimilation.

It would require a separate chapter to show in detail how this truth is confirmed by the teachings of history, or rather how it is the fruit of historical research. I shall therefore merely touch upon a few of the main points. The doctrine concerning God and divine things becomes ever clearer and more definite, and at the same time deeper and simpler; the wild, confused, vague, constantly changing ideas of unbridled fancy are sifted, classified, and reduced to a few leading dogmas, then to maxims,

and lastly to principles and to one paramount principle. The conception of God becomes more rational and exalted; from being crude and material it becomes ever more spiritual; from being wholly or partly animal it becomes ever more human and superhuman; and as men become more keenly alive to the highest qualities in human nature, they attribute them in perfection to the divinity also. As the higher civilisation, in the best sense of the term, advances, and as the increase of knowledge, the enlightenment of views, improvement of taste, refinement of moral sentiment, and mastery over nature beget in man an ever higher sense of his value as man, so too they materially modify his conception of his relation to the deity. Fear will then gradually give way to trust, servility will yield to devotion, no less fervent, but emanating from a purer source, and therefore voluntary. Man will no longer regard God merely as the Almighty Sovereign, whose blind caprice he must fear, whose inscrutable wrath he must strive to avert; but he will look up to Him as the Holy One, whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, and before whom the sinner alone must tremble in the consciousness of his guilt. When morality has ceased to be a law, and has been merged and consummated in the all-ruling principle of love, all eudæmonism, all desire of reward, being thus at the same time banished, the attitude of man to his God will then become that

of children to the Father who loves them, and whom they love, and he will seek his sole reward in the fulfilment of his destiny, and his only happiness in communion with his Creator.

Religious observances, institutions, and customs, or, in a word, the forms of worship, are slower to follow the more advanced civilisation. Doctrine, worship, and observances are in their origin closely akin, having sprung from the same religious disposition, and responding to the same spiritual needs. But tenacious as are doctrinal systems and traditional dogmas, religious observances and organisations are still more so. Religious views and conceptions are modified imperceptibly and more or less unconsciously at first; in course of time, however, the modifications become so serious that the faithful adherents of the old system begin to notice them, and strife is kindled. But forms of cult hold their ground much longer, often long after they have ceased to satisfy any real want, and thus lose their *raison d'être* altogether. At last, however, in this case also, the gulf becomes too palpable to escape notice; and new forms and institutions, though often not without a serious struggle, or even an entire revolution, are substituted for them. Yet it is curious how slowly this comes about, how long the misshapen old images, completely banished from the domestic hearth and from the market-place, are treasured up in the temples as more sacred than all

others; how long the symbols and representations of what is repugnant to decency are tolerated in the holy places and in the ceremonial without general offence; and how long many a cult clings to barbarous, bloody, and grovelling rites, condemned and forbidden both by law and morality in ordinary human intercourse. Many even take offence because their king will no longer suffer his God to dwell in a tent or a poor enclosure, while he himself resides in a house of cedar or in a sumptuous palace, or because a Pericles invokes the aid of the masters of sculpture and architecture in order to represent and to house the gods worthily. The Jews and Christians who deemed their God too high and holy to be represented in visible form seemed to the Greek and Roman little better than atheists. A religion that demands no other sacrifice than the entire dedication of heart and life; that attaches no value to set forms of prayer, thoughtlessly mumbled and endlessly repeated, of which not a syllable can be omitted without destroying their efficacy; a religion which, on the contrary, approves of any form of prayer that wells up from a pious heart and a pure soul—such a religion is at first sight, in the eyes of many, not a religion at all. In short, the influence of general development or civilisation manifests itself in every department of human life, but in religion last of all, because religion has struck the deepest roots into the human mind, and is most

inseparably bound up with man's personality. And this reminds me of a striking expression once used by the famous French orator Athanase Coquerel: "To make me change my opinion you have only to adduce convincing proofs that it is wrong; but to deprive me of my religious conviction, *il faut me déchirer de haut en bas.*"

Nevertheless the reforms which a more advanced civilisation demands in the sphere of religion, as well as in others, are bound to come, however tardy their advent. Progress in the intellectual, æsthetic, ethical, and even in the social and political spheres, has an educative influence on religion; and religion is sure in the end to assimilate thence all that makes its creed clearer and deeper, that makes man's disposition towards God and his mode of worshipping Him purer and worthier, that makes the religious community more independent, and better adapted to the aims it has in view. This *must* take place. And why? Because the human spirit is one. Those who regard civilisation as a mere external, a form they imitate, a fashion they follow, will probably fail to observe its inconsistency with their traditional religion. But those who are thoroughly imbued with it, who have marched with the development of the age, will be unable to rest satisfied with a religion which still occupies a much lower stage. Their knowledge is more extensive and better grounded, they have learned the by no means common art of

reflecting, their artistic taste and their moral sentiment are purified, and they have formed entirely new views of life and the world. It is therefore impossible for them now to tolerate the childish conceptions and unseemly observances which made up the religion of a former generation; and they feel the need of bringing their religion into accord with the civilisation in which they have been brought up. The only alternatives would be to give up the fruits of development altogether, or else religion itself. The Rechabites of all ages and peoples choose the first alternative. Rather than sacrifice their religion—that is, their ancestral form of religion, which they mistake for religion itself—they anxiously seclude themselves from all progress. Others, *esprits forts*, as they modestly call themselves, or free-thinkers, who, as a rule, seem to consider themselves free not to think at all, and honestly mistaken persons too, starting from the false premisses that religion can have but one form by which it must stand or fall, and not being prepared to forfeit the blessings of civilisation, choose the second of the above alternatives and break with religion altogether. But man cannot find rest in either of these counsels of despair. He does not leave his task unfinished, but he ever crowns each stage of development by bringing religion also into harmony with it. The attraction he feels towards the divine, the infinite, is too powerful and overmastering to allow him to rest content with a conception of it, or with a

mode of entering into relations with it, which has come to be repugnant to his advanced artistic taste or moral sentiment, or at variance with his scientific and philosophic insight. And this attraction constrains him to weave an appropriate garment out of the new material. Or in theological language, with each higher phase of general development there corresponds a new religious revelation.

And I would ask whether we are going too far, or assuming too much, in believing that we here discern a supreme law of development in its application to religion, the law of the *unity of mind?* Man finds himself in an awkward dilemma, which ere long becomes intolerable, when one sphere of his spiritual life, the religious in this case, lags far behind the others —his knowledge, his sense of the beautiful, his morality, and the views of life and the world which he founds upon them. The pain of his inward struggle compels him to harmonise his religion with these views of life and the world by reforming it. A particular religion which does not keep pace with civilisation, and takes up a hostile attitude to it, must suffer and languish, if the latter gets the upper hand; but if the religion itself gains the victory, its adherents are deprived of the blessings of that civilisation. A particular civilisation, on the other hand, which disregards the religious element, and is content with the progress it has made in other departments, bears no lasting fruit, and soon

stagnates or declines. Or, briefly, the development of religion is the necessary consummation of all human development, and is at once demanded and promoted by it.

But the problem we have studied to-day is connected with another which cannot be explained by the law of the unity of mind, and must therefore be accounted for otherwise. I mean that isolation is prejudicial to development, while living intercourse with others generally promotes it. I say generally, for there is an exception to be noticed afterwards.

This is a general proposition, and holds true of all mental, or rather human, development. In the case of individuals any one may observe it in his own surroundings. The man who obstinately secludes himself, who ignores all ideas which have not been formed in his own esteemed brain, and turns a deaf ear to all ideas and convictions different from those in which he has been brought up, remains narrow and stunted, constantly turns round in the same circle, and fails to advance a single step. It requires no great knowledge of history to teach us that it is the same with nations. Which are those that have developed a higher civilisation, and have therefore acted a more important part in the world's history, and have taken the lead of all others? Not those which have jealously held aloof from intercourse with others, or happened not to come

in contact with them, shunned everything foreign, and clung tenaciously to the traditions of their forefathers. Surely those alone which, either by conquest, or by trade and navigation, or by intellectual intercourse, have come into abiding contact with other more or less developed nations, and have benefited by their rich experience. All the really historical nations of antiquity — the Egyptians and Western Asiatics, the Chinese, Indians, and Persians, the Hellenes and Italians — migrated from elsewhere to their historic dwelling-places and there mingled with an autochthonous population. Others, like the Japanese in the East, and the Germans and Celts of Europe, only attained the plenitude of their capabilities through the influence of a foreign civilisation—that is, the Chinese and the Græco-Roman—as indeed also holds true of the peoples above-named. And the same was the case with the original inhabitants of America. There the Natchez of the North, the Muyscas of the South, the Maya peoples and the Aztecs of Mexico, and the Quichua and Aymaras of Peru surpassed their congeners in development, but all had immigrated from elsewhere to the regions where their higher, albeit barbaric, civilisation grew up. On the contrary, the dwellers in Central Arabia, probably the cradle-land of the Semites, remained longest shut out from intercourse with the outer world, and were long the most backward of the Semites, although it was only when a

prospect into the wide world was opened up to them that it was discovered what a highly gifted nation they were. And nearly the same remark applies to the Slavonic peoples. I need not further illustrate this point from modern history. These are well-known facts. The peoples that hold aloof from foreign influence remain stationary; but those which, no longer by conquest and migration, but by intellectual intercourse, by letters, science, and religious teaching, are in constant touch with what goes on in the enlightened world around them, are sure to progress.

No one, I believe, will deny this, or at least no one who is qualified to express an opinion. But many deny that what admittedly holds true of general civilisation has any application to religions in their mutual intercourse; and this is an opinion which we must not ignore.

Nowhere does there prevail such a spirit of exclusiveness as in religion. Many good people anxiously strive to keep their religion free from contact with others, lest the strange, and from their point of view false and heretical, ideas should contaminate it and cause it to degenerate. In the religions of antiquity it was the strange gods that people sought to repel, but without denying their existence, or disputing that they might be powerful, beneficent, and adorable beings in their own domain and for their own people. The adherents of the ethical religions, on the other hand, repudiate all

deities, with all their various cults, that conflict with the ruling conceptions of their own religion, or seem to detract from the honour of their only true God or gods. And to a certain extent this is reasonable, and for the weak it may be even necessary for a time, provided only that it be a temporary precaution applied in certain cases, and not amounting to absolute exclusion. But the history of religion bears ample testimony to the fact that religion has never really developed except when a number of different religions have come into contact. Although such cases abound, one striking example may suffice. Israel — whose religion surpasses all the religions of antiquity in purity and loftiness, and has given birth to two others which count their adherents by millions among those most gifted families of peoples, the Semites and the Aryans—was personally acquainted with all the chief religions of antiquity. The Israelites had seen the Egyptian burning incense before the Hapi bull of Memphis, the ever-reviving Ptah, and before the Mena bull of the Sun-god of On; they had beheld their Canaanitish neighbours and compatriots worshipping the Baalîm and Ashtartes, and the children of Phœnicians and Moabites passing through the fire to their deity; by the waters of Babylon they had witnessed the solemn processions of Maruduk and Nabû, and they afterwards heard of Auramazda, the god of Koresh and Darius, who most resembled their own Yahve; they had been, to the grief and horror of the pious,

spectators of the invasion of their holy temple on Zion by Assyrian and Egyptian deities with all the host of heaven, and by Zeus Olympius and Jupiter O. M. Capitolinus. And not a few in Israel had themselves bent the knee to all these gods, and even burnt their children before Molech. But all the more faithfully did the nucleus of the people cling to their own purer worship. The more clearly did the religious thinkers in Israel become conscious of their higher and better possession. The more fully were developed all the great and glorious elements slumbering in germ in their own religion. Yet this was not merely a counteraction of all foreign modes of worship. On the contrary, they may even be said to have imitated a number of foreign elements, and to have adapted them to their own religion. Their religious horizon was thus extended, the conception they formed of their national God was at once enriched and softened, and his service was elevated and ennobled. In this case also, as in that of general development, assimilation had been more or less consciously at work. As in Israel, so in Greece and Rome, so among the Persians and Germans, so it has been everywhere and always.

The explanation of these historical facts flows naturally from what has been already said. Before entering upon it, let us further note that we are not speaking of mere imitation or adoption. This takes

place also, but it leads to nothing and bears no fruit. The Phœnicians at one time aped the Egyptians in everything, not only adopting their external forms of civilisation and artistic models, but even substituting the gods of Egypt for their own, or at least assigning them equal rank. And the same thing was done by the ancient Ethiopians under the influence of the Egyptian domination. But in neither case was the development of religion in the least affected. So long as a foreign system continues foreign, unappropriated, and unabsorbed, it is incapable of conducing to higher spiritual life, and is apt to prove more faulty than the original native system itself. As an instance of genuine and fruitful assimilation, on the other hand, let us see what the genius of the Greeks made of the Apollo and Artemis of Asia Minor, and how they converted the wanton and the austere Ashtartes of Western Asia into their Aphroditê and Artemis. Nor is it a mere relation of master and disciple that is here in question. It is unnecessary, as a rule, that a religion should be a higher or a purer one in order that it may influence the development of another. Confronted with a lower religion than theirs, people are all the more alive to the merits of their own, and the more eager to develop it. Of this both Israel and Hellas afford a proof. As in the case of individuals, so in the mutual intercourse of religions, heterogeneous elements act beneficially.

Those that are more highly developed, and therefore superior, at once attract and repel, but conquer in the end; and the fusion of two forms of religion, at first hostile, gives birth to a new development which is sure to be richer and fuller than its predecessor.

Let us sum up these remarks. When we perceive that intellectual intercourse with others promotes development, while seclusion and isolation hinder it, and often bring it to a standstill; when we note that contact not only with people on a higher plane, more highly gifted, and more advanced, but also with the inferior and less gifted, gives a powerful impetus to development, because it causes men or communities to discover their slumbering powers, and stimulates them to a better use of these; and when we see that all this is confirmed by the history of religion too— I think that we here discern a law of development which applies to religion also, and which I would formulate thus:—

"All development, apart from the natural capabilities of men and peoples, results from the stimulus given to self-consciousness by contact with a different stage of development, whether higher or lower."

And if we transfer this general law to our own particular domain, two practical rules flow from it: First, "The religion that will attain the highest development is that which is most alive to the genuinely religious

elements in other forms;" and secondly, "Religious development is best promoted by the free intercourse of its most diverse manifestations."

But I foresee that many, on hearing these rules, will object to them, and their objections must not remain unanswered. Does not religion, they will ask, when thus allowed constantly to associate with art, science, and philosophy, with a refined, but human, and therefore always somewhat corrupt civilisation, run the risk of being deprived of her sweet savour and her vigour, and, to please her companions, of being induced to abate something of her strict demands, and to part with something of her earnestness? Must she not, ever amid worldly surroundings, unavoidably be contaminated by them, and at last become worldly herself? Is it not to be feared that, by studying such divergent opinions, and by searching for religious truth in so many diverse systems, men will become disloyal to their own religion, be shaken in their convictions, and at last, in utter perplexity and despair, exclaim, "What is truth?" Will this freedom of thought not lead to want of principle, and to indifference to the purity and truth of their own religion, the precious fruits of so much conflict and of so long and toilsome a process of development? Or, to adhere to our scientific province — for the objections mentioned are all of a practical character—is it not the true nature of religion to sever herself from an unholy world, and to

seek the solitude extolled by our devout poet Lodensteijn ?—

> "O holy solitude !
> In commune with my God,
> Would I were one with Thee !"

And will not religion, by allowing herself to be carried along with the stream of general development, insensibly neglect her own inward development ? Groen van Prinsterer, the former leader of the then small religious-political party in Holland which called itself anti-revolutionary, used to say of it, "In our isolation lies our power." Does this not apply to religion everywhere and always, and is it not precisely in her isolation that her power consists ?

I at once admit all this. I even go a step further, and maintain that the more religion develops, the more she will advance in what I might call her chastity—that is, the more she will shrink from exposing what she deems holiest to the curious gaze and the unskilled judgment of the *profanum vulgus*, an often thoughtless and superficial world. Least of all should I wish to see her led and controlled by any extraneous power, and thus deprived of her independence ; for, as I shall afterwards show, her independence increases with her advancing development, and is one of its indications. And what applies to religion in general holds true of each religious community in its relation to others. Intolerance is an ugly failing, and those who demand

freedom for themselves are bound to accord it to others. But each communion, each church, if it is to be of any value, and to contribute to man's religious development, must be consistent, and must form, maintain, and vindicate its own character. It is not merely entitled, but solemnly bound to do this.

Do not, however, suppose that this is forbidden or prevented by the above-mentioned laws which we sought to deduce from history. Those who have considered the meaning of the word "assimilation," which I have used advisedly, will readily understand this. Development, as I have said, is promoted by assimilation; religion assimilates whatever is good and true in general culture; and each form of religion assimilates whatever is good and true in other forms. Does this mean that religion must yield and conform to the demands of worldly culture, to the whims of changing fashion, to the not always irrefragable dicta of science, or to philosophical systems which may be overthrown by a succeeding generation? Does it mean that a church is simply to copy and to borrow the forms of a different communion, its doctrine and cult, though at variance with her own character and stage of development, or at all events that she should adopt a certain eclecticism? I have practically answered these questions already. Assimilation is appropriation of what conduces to one's own growth and increases

one's own spiritual possessions. Development does not therefore cease to be a purely inward process.

And as to the practical objection that the law of development is fraught with danger, we do not deny it—but it is only dangerous for the weak, for those who have no religious conviction of their own, for those who are not rooted and grounded in their faith. If you are weak and ill, remain in your sick-room, and shut the windows close; for the fresh outer air, the breath of life to the healthy, might be fatal to you. So there are conditions and periods in religious life when its seclusion, for a time at least, may be salutary and even necessary. But living religion demands the open air of intellectual intercourse with general culture and the religious development of mankind.

All growth, all development, all life is a battle, and no battle is free from danger. But when the heart or vital principle is sound it is braced by the struggle, and will in the end surmount the danger. I again think of the Israelites. Their heart was sound. Conceptions which caused the weak among them to stray were therefore welcomed by prophets animated by the Holy Spirit, and independently utilised by them in order to exalt and magnify their religion. And that religion, completed and perfected, has become the religion of the most highly developed nations in the world.

LECTURE IX.

INFLUENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION.

We shall now continue our inquiry into the laws of development both general and religious, or, to express it more modestly and prudently, into the requisites for the promotion of development.

And the first question I propose to discuss is—What place the individual person occupies in the process of development, and how far he contributes to it. As this problem is somewhat complex it is apt to be neglected, but for that very reason it is one of the utmost importance. The fact that it has received so little attention is probably the result of misapprehension, as some have supposed that development always meant unconscious growth, which would exclude the conscious co-operation of individuals. But they have forgotten that the "development of religion" is a kind of elliptical term, denoting,

as I have already pointed out, the development of the religious man. Our science is no more a natural science than that of language; it is historical, and is concerned with rational beings.

Others have thought that the individual only makes his influence felt in the higher stages of development; and you will remember Whitney's classification of religions, founded on this idea, into those which are the fruit of unconscious development, and those founded by particular persons. I need not repeat my objections to this classification, as I have already stated them. But the idea on which it rests must not remain unnoticed, as it contains an element of truth. For it cannot be denied that, as mankind grows up and progresses in general civilisation, so individuality becomes more pronounced. In a lower state people are much more alike; individuals have therefore less authority over their tribesmen and contemporaries, and if their names survive at all they are soon forgotten. It is not till a later stage, when man has become more clearly conscious of the power and independence of his mind and his intellectual capacity, that there arise those rarely gifted men, far surpassing their fellows, who lead instead of being led, who, because they open up new paths, are opposed, hated, and persecuted by many, even by the great majority, but who are revered, followed, and obeyed by an ever-increasing number of faithful dis-

ciples—yea sometimes deified and worshipped—and whose names in that case are gratefully remembered even by remote generations. But it is none the less probable that in prehistoric times also, to which the imagination of the ancients loved to refer the exploits of their demigods and heroes, the ancestors of their nation, and the founders of their State, everything that was new, all progress, reform, discovery, invention, must have originated in the brain of a single individual, or at most in that of several at the same time, although the generality of people (as indeed still often happens) could not tell who were the authors of these new ideas. The very names of these authors, therefore, fall into oblivion. A proof that the power of personality made itself felt even in that primæval time of which no historical records are preserved is to be found in the numberless hero-legends of widely differing peoples which we meet with, not only among highly cultured Greeks and Indians, Babylonians and Chinese, but also among uncivilised and barbarous peoples like the Red Indians of America, the Polynesians, and many others. Few of the heroes of these legends can indeed be regarded as historical persons—for if there are glorified men among them like Sargon and Cyrus, most of them consist in impersonated gods, who are represented as saviours in time of need, averters of disaster, inventors of arts, founders of civilisation, softeners of

rude manners, and protectors of their people. But such legends would not have arisen, the transformation of deities into men of divine origin would not have taken place, nor could even the thought of such actions, fraught with blessings for humanity, have been conceived, unless people had experienced the influence of more highly gifted individuals, and had recognised how much they owed to their agency. The force of this argument has hitherto escaped notice.

Generally speaking, no one denies the fact that in history, including that of religion, and also in our own society, certain individuals are prominent above all others in knowledge, character, talent, and genius, and that progress in every direction is mainly due to their work; nor is it denied that religious communities are founded or reformed by them, that purer religious sentiments and profounder religious thoughts have first been diffused by them, sentiments which have been cultivated in their own souls, thoughts that have matured in their own minds, and that, in short, they have kindled a new light in the sphere of religion and have interpreted a higher revelation. To dispute this would be to deny the whole course of history, and to be blind to what we all see going on around us. But people appreciate these facts differently. The common and more or less superficial and popular conception, which some have even erected into a scientific doctrine, is that in human history great personalities

are everything, and that all progress and development must be accounted for as having emanated from them alone, while they themselves stand isolated, as unexplained and mysterious creations, among their fellow-men. A diametrically opposite view is that all this is only appearance, that individuals are really nothing, or at least that they merely voice what already lives in the hearts of all, and has germinated in the minds of all, and that they are only the unconscious and willless instruments of the spirit of the community. In this case also the truth lies probably between the two extremes. At all events I cannot assent to either of these views.

There is no doubt that the actual events of human history are very different from the fairy tales with which we amuse children. Those mighty spirits who enlighten and comfort the world, deliver it from the bonds of ignorance and misery, open up new paths and thus become the saviours and pioneers of their fellow-men — nay, even the most highly gifted of geniuses — never stand entirely alone; but, as they have been born and brought up in the midst of a particular people, community, and circle of friends and relations of their own, so they have developed under the influence of these, and share their often very imperfect notions of nature, of the soul, of history, and of the world in general. To this extent they are actually the children of their age and their people,

the products of a preceding development. Even their new departures, the ideas they express in a new and original form, are not absolutely unheard of, but have already hovered before the minds of others, who are accordingly the first to welcome them. They have had their precursors, above whom they tower like giants, who perhaps deem themselves unworthy to unloose the latchets of their shoes, but who yet have prepared the way for them. They are, as it were, expected, these great reformers and founders of religion, and are therefore joyfully hailed as redeemers. And if they respond to the long-felt yearnings and aspirations of the generation in which they live, it is partly because these very aspirations have quickened the germ of higher life which slumbered in their own souls.

But does this imply that they themselves are nothing out of the common, that, as Hegel teaches, they are mere "will-less tools in the hands of the world-spirit," so that, though they play an important part in the world's history, it is merely as actors, who have not written the drama themselves, or even as marionettes, moved by an invisible hand? Must we, like Buckle and others, regard them as nothing but media, in which ideas, self-developing, are reflected, so that it is out of the question to speak of pre-eminent individuals or their influence on development? Or must we, with Macaulay, reduce all originality and all genius to the gift of greater re-

ceptivity for the ideas of others, so that persons thus gifted are simply like men who stand a little higher than others, and who therefore merely receive the rays of light a little earlier than dwellers in the valley?[1] Surely not! What truly great religious spirit, what outstanding pioneer in the domain of religion, has not felt that a power "not his own" has been working within him, bringing light to his mind and peace to his soul? Which of them has not acknowledged this, and given utterance to it in many different figures and images? Who will maintain that they were fully conscious of the great importance and the far-reaching and momentous consequences of their reforming activity, or that they always aimed designedly at the great revolution in human history they have brought about? Who will deny that they bore witness because they were constrained, because they felt an inward and irresistible impulse? But who, unless he has taken leave of all sense of discrimination, would compare this inward impulse, this constraint of a man's conscience, with the wire-pulling of puppets or the repetition of a part learned by rote? We shall not be so rash as now to broach the difficult problems of Determinism and the possibility of reconciling man's dependence with his liberty. But we may venture to say this. Those who see a revelation of God in the light which—certainly not without

[1] See passages quoted by S. Hoekstra, Bzn., Zedenleer, i. 189 *seq.*

their having eagerly sought it and profoundly pondered over it — has dawned upon their minds, a revelation before which they bow, and at the same time a summons from God to the fulfilment of which they dedicate themselves, have indeed become one with God in will, but are surely not on that account will-less. It is their own will that actuates them, more powerfully and more truly than if they obeyed their lower inclinations, their love of ease and fear of man. The truth in whose service they enlist, whatever be its source, and however they have attained to it, has become their possession, and in following it and proclaiming it they listen solely to dictates of their own hearts.

If therefore we entirely reject the above idealistic speculation, still more positively must we refuse to acquiesce in the doctrine of materialistic positivism. The great thinkers whom we reverentially regard as the creators of new religion, as reformers and prophets, are nothing but media in which self-developing ideas are reflected! What, after all, is this but a mere phrase? What are the ideas which develop themselves, as if they were bacilli wafted through the air — ideas which the highly gifted individuals do not even make their own, but which are merely reflected in them? "Words, words, words," as Hamlet says. Macaulay, for whom as a writer and an orator I entertain great respect, has said nearly the

same thing in a different figure of speech, which I have already cited; but his figure is neither clearer nor apter. Instead of speaking of ideas floating in the air, he makes a light shine. But where, how, and by whose agency revealed? And the sole difference between the more and the less gifted, between geniuses and ordinary men, is that the former behold the light a little sooner than the latter. We know of old that comparisons are lame, but this one has not even a leg to stand upon. For surely it cannot be maintained that the sunlight reaches the dwellers in the valley through the medium of those who have climbed a little higher. Be this as it may, the object is to deny all originality to those who are revered by men as their pioneers and masters, their saviours and reformers. The development to which they apparently gave an impulse already existed, and merely culminates in them, so that in fact we are not indebted to them for anything new.

This I utterly dispute. However great an influence, in judging of men who have gained the foremost rank in history, and in that of religion in particular, we may be disposed to attribute to their people and time, to their upbringing and surroundings, there always remains something besides which cannot be thus accounted for; and it is just this something which enabled them independently to utilise what they had received from elsewhere, which gave them such power

over their fellow-men, and which distinguishes them from all others, however like them in conceptions and views. And this something is their individuality, their character. The work of religious reformers is commonly too partially regarded as the revelation of new truths, or the preaching of doctrines hitherto unheard of. But it is not that alone, nor is that even the chief part of it. It is above all the awakening of a new spirit, of a purer religious sentiment. Nor is it always necessary that the reformers should say, but rather that they should be, something new. And the most powerful means of inspiring a new and higher spirit is precisely the personality of the reformer, his individual character, the one thing he does not owe to his ancestors or contemporaries, but which is his by nature, and which science may analyse but cannot explain.

Some people have been at great pains to prove, not always with friendly intention towards Christianity, that none of the preaching of Jesus, as handed down in the Gospels, is original, but that the whole of it may be found, though disconnectedly and sporadically, in the writings of the Jewish Rabbis and the Greek philosophers. The resemblances seem to me less striking than people are sometimes pleased to suppose, and most of them are somewhat far-fetched. But even if what they allege were true, even if the whole Gospel had been compiled from a great variety of Jewish and Greek writings, which seems very improbable, to judge from

the character of its first adherents, yet two incontestable facts, which are in reality one, still remain. One is, that all the truths, which are said to have been recognised already, are here reduced to one great principle; and the other, that one personage was the prime mover, who realised that principle in himself and his life, and by so doing aroused enthusiasm for it in his disciples.

The power of personality is the most potent factor in development, chiefly in the sphere of religion, but in other spiritual spheres also, to a greater extent than is commonly supposed. Communities, churches, and schools also contribute to it, but not to the same extent, and often more negatively than positively. Even when development is apparently progressing quietly and gradually of itself, the influence of individuals may generally be traced, although they are not always extraordinary geniuses or historic celebrities. The whole history of the development of religion proves that the Word must always become flesh in order to gain admission to the human heart.

An attempt has been made[1] to classify individuals in different categories in accordance with the influence they exert upon development, as, for example, (1) creative spirits, such as prophets, geniuses, heroes; (2) those who utilise new creations and render them serviceable for the general good, such as enthusiasts

[1] Hoekstra, i. c. 197.

and devotees, to which class belong apostles and evangelists; and (3) those who can rightly appreciate them and receive them—that is to say, the believers. This classification is not unapt, though one might say that the prophets generally belong to the second category, or at least are not always creative spirits. At all events, we must bear in mind that Professor Hoekstra, the author of this classification, adds that no precise line of demarcation can be drawn, and that some of the most pre-eminent personalities combine several of the qualities named. Perhaps, subject to the same reservation, especially with regard to religious development, the following classification may be found preferable. The foremost place is occupied by those who found a new order of things, with whom a new era of history begins, founders of religions and mighty reformers; to the second would belong their precursors, as well as their disciples, who were the first to understand them and be inspired by them, such as apostles, missionaries, prophets, and preachers who proclaim the glad tidings; in the third class would be placed saints and witnesses, who by their life and death, and great thinkers, who by their instruction, whether oral or written, sealed and firmly established the new faith; lastly would come the more practical characters, who testify of it in the everyday world by their life and work. But a further distinction must be made, at least in the highest of

these groups, between those whose superior minds and those whose powerful characters exert influence, between men of light and men of leading.

It would be a curious and interesting study to inquire what part is played by woman in the development of religion. One would expect her to feel more attracted by the emotional element in religion than by the intellectual, more by the concrete than by the abstract, and to value sentiment more highly than doctrine. Your philosophical-religious demonstrations, your dogmatic distinctions, will leave her unmoved, unless by your arguments you would deprive the beloved object of her adoration of its glory and divine majesty; and in that case she will turn against you and cling to the adored object with all the more passionate love, or perhaps — as not unfrequently happens at the present day — she will give up her religion altogether. It is only under compulsion that the Rachels give up their teraphîm; and the Meleket of Heaven was nearer and dearer to the women of Jerusalem than the Holy One of Israel who dwells in secret. It has been erroneously maintained that women are obstinately attached to old forms, and that they are therefore more likely to hinder than to promote the development of religion. Make them believe that some one is a dangerous heretic, an enemy of their religion, and they will eagerly pile up the fagots around his stake, like the old woman

whose zeal extorted from the dying John Hus the saintly exclamation, "*Sancta simplicitas!*" But give them a person whom they can love, and the Maries and Salomes will remain faithful to him to death and beyond it. I am not aware that history records any case of a religion of note being founded by a woman; but we meet with women as priestesses, oracular sibyls, prophetesses, and saints, and above all as messengers of divine love, who with gentle hand strive to alleviate poverty, sickness, and other miseries of this earthly existence. They are the votaries of calm consecration, and contribute incalculably to the preservation of the mystic and devotional elements in religion.

As in all spiritual life, so in religious life also, the person or individual is a potent motor of development. Must science then rest satisfied with recognising this fact, or should it go a step further, and try to explain how the pioneers of religious development have come to be what they are? I fear that such an attempt would be vain, or at least that the investigation of this difficult problem is not yet so far advanced as to afford any prospect of its solution. Unless our sources fail or flow too scantily, much in every personality can be accounted for psychologically by their nationality, the spirit of their age, their lineage, education, course of

reading, career, sphere of activity, and other special circumstances. But there always remains something which cannot be thus accounted for, and this is the chief thing of all. We cannot, for example, explain how it is that of two or more persons placed in the same surroundings, children of the same family, and brought up by the same parents, one grows up to be a man of talent, a genius, far above his contemporaries —nay, towering far above the average level of mankind—while the others remain insignificant and commonplace: like Rembrandt's brother, for instance, who became a common miller like his father, while Rembrandt himself attained a place among the three or four greatest painters in the world; or like Beethoven's brother, whose chief talent consisted in extorting money from the illustrious master, and who thus embittered his life; or like the brothers of the world-ruling Napoleon, the "hero as king," as your Carlyle calls him, who acted their part as kings so indifferently. Some inquirers, in despair I might almost say, have invoked the aid of psychiatry and tried to account for genius as a deviation from the normal spiritual life, as a bewilderment of intellect. Physicians like Brinton have sought for the mainspring of religious inspiration in sexual life, and associated it with hysteria; while Sprenger, another medical man, an Arabic scholar and biographer of Mohammed, has laid great stress on the fact that Mohammed was an epileptic; and a simi-

lar assertion has even been made regarding the Apostle Paul. We thus gradually drift into pathology. But surely it is an inversion of the true order of things to seek for the fountainhead of inspired ideas in aberrations of mind and nervous affections, which are often caused by mental overwork and anguish of soul, or by the overwhelming thoughts which are at once poor weak man's salvation and his ruin.

In any case, even if this problem were not insoluble, as I believe it to be, we could only touch upon it here in passing, as it belongs rather to the ontology of religion than to the morphology, with which we are now concerned, and is closely connected with the problem of the origin of religion in which our investigation must culminate. I must, however, try to give some answer here to several questions which may be asked, and have indeed already been asked. In the first place, "Does the influence of the individual really produce all the effects you ascribe to it? Are not the reform, the spiritual regeneration, and the inspiration, which are apparently caused by the words and works of an individual, really the result of the idea people form of them, the result of imagination rather than of observation? Do we not remark, in all the relations of men, that every one who feels himself attracted, who admires, who loves, unconsciously idealises the object of his veneration and love, whether prince or statesman, orator or scholar, popular leader or master,

friend or idolised wife or mother, and that he creates for himself a conception of them which is very far from according with the reality? And is this not above all the case in religion?" "Around the personality of the reformer, the great teacher, the founder of religion," it is further argued, "spring up the magnifying legends. He is generally exalted to a supernatural sphere, and then only is his power over the multitude perfected. Those who stood nearer him, the more highly developed, those whose faith is more ardent and vigorous, do not require this conception to aid their belief; but those who can only appreciate the spiritual when it partakes of the miraculous seem to require such aid, and they are therefore swayed, not by the person himself, but by their own conception of him." There is some truth in this reasoning. But there is nothing new and surprising in it, except to those who are simple enough to suppose that any one of our perceptions is purely objective. The influence of personality certainly consists partly in what is thought and believed of it. Or, in Platonic phrase, we may express it thus: it consists, partly at least, in the εἴδωλα, or images, given off by a personality and reflected in the minds of others. Reverence for another, whoever he be, and the attachment, obedience, and devotion it entails, are in a certain sense idolatry, but are very permissible. Or, in other words, geniuses and pioneers are not alone active in their spiritual

working, nor are those on whom they act solely passive; but both are active at the same time. If life emanates from them, it is because it awakens living germs slumbering in the hearts of others, and causes them to burst forth. Their creative spirit gives, as it were, voice and form to what had hitherto been powerless, though potentially present in the bosoms of others. It is they who awaken this life, who create this form: they are the sun, without whose fostering beams the germs would die, and the slumbering life would never awake. At the root of these creations of poetic fancy already referred to lies an unmistakable reality. Their heroes would never have thus been extolled if they had not been distinguished by rich endowments, great moral power, profound insight, and above all by their character. Nay, I venture to say that most of them were probably greater and loftier than was ever dreamt of by the majority of those who extolled them so highly. And even if they did not possess all the virtues and powers which people attributed to them in gratitude for what they had bestowed, and in enthusiasm for what they had been, their true greatness did not consist in these, and could only be appreciated by the few. No one perhaps ever understood them thoroughly.

Another question is this. Admitting that the development of religion is specially promoted by personality, do we not find this advantage more than counterbalanced by the injury done by other and no less

powerful characters hostile to progress, who do their utmost to maintain the existing state of things? No sooner does some man of conspicuous gifts or fervent piety, who has ceased to find salvation in the traditional forms of religion, appear on the scene, and strive to deliver others also from the yoke of these forms, than he is vigorously opposed, not only by the ignorant many, not only by the official representatives of the established religion, whether from self-interest or conviction, but even by inspired prophets, by champions of the old system, no less gifted than himself. And they are far stronger than he, because they usually have the temporal powers on their side, the power of the majority, that of the secular arm, and that of a long-established priesthood, and because they lean on a powerful, firmly founded organisation, instead of having the arduous task of building up a new one. Yet it must not be supposed that they impede the development of religion. In the first place, they cannot do so; for history proves that the new system, if it be truly a clearer revelation of religious truth, a higher and purer form of religious life, must always triumph in the end. But they too contribute unconsciously and involuntarily to the process of development. It is an error to suppose that this is solely the work of the reformers. These can only participate in it provided they do not quit historic ground, provided the reform be rooted in tradition; and the representatives of history, the defenders of tra-

dition, are the vindicators of the established order of things. Genuine reformers, those who have founded any permanent system, are therefore at once conservative and progressive,—men like Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin, and not like Karlstadt or Servetus, though these last surely need not have been persecuted like wild beasts or burnt at the stake.

But we must look a little more deeply into this subject, to see if we can discover any general law of development which specially concerns religion, and which requires to be studied by us from that special point of view.

When we survey the whole of history, it seems at first sight to be but a series of special histories, succeeding each other, or sometimes running parallel—histories of peoples who grow up, and flourish for a longer or shorter period, but all of whom, even those who took the lead and dominated others by their superior power or by their higher culture, have perished, to be replaced by others. But the observant spectator sees something more in it than mere change and kaleidoscopic variety; beneath the surface he detects constant progress. Human society and culture, as a whole, do not only assume new forms, but are continually growing; and these new forms are on the whole richer, ampler, purer and higher than those they supersede. Of the old nothing essential is lost: it falls into the shade for a time, but it reappears at last, though in different form.

The unity and continuity of the general development of mankind, a doctrine which justifies history as a record, not merely of successive stages of social life and culture, but of society and civilisation as a whole, has long been acknowledged by all earnest and philosophical students of history, who are the only competent judges. The history of men is at the same time the history of humanity.

Does this apply to religion also? Here too we find different forms superseding each other; but can we detect any unity? The fact is that religion has hitherto proved ineradicable. She has undergone many an anxious struggle, she has passed through many a crisis, when those who were eager to throw off her yoke hoped, and those who loved her feared, she would perish in the conflict and be superseded by philosophy, art, or science, or at most by a new doctrine of morality. Such hopes have ever been put to shame, such fears have proved groundless. Religious forms have been discarded, religious communities inseparably connected with a moribund nation or government have perished with it, but religion herself has always survived the most critical periods, and has always reasserted her sway over men's hearts with increasing force. But is there any connection between the old state of things and the new? Is there unity? or is the thread snapped each time and a new one attached? Is there continuity? or is there a constant rise and fall, an

alternation of bloom and decay, of progress and relapse, in which the ground gained is ever lost again, and where, if it were found impossible to arrest the decline, there would be imminent risk of utter annihilation?

The first question, whether there is unity, connection, and an unbroken thread here, we unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. This is indeed already apparent from our preceding inquiries, and from what I have said regarding the contribution of each religion, or at least of each historical religion, to religious development—a contribution taken over and independently utilised by a later system which assumes the leadership, so that nothing material is ever lost which can promote the growth of religion; further, from our study of the streams of development, which for a long time flow through their own separate channels, but always at last unite; lastly, from the whole course of the history of civilisation, the unity of which may now be taken as proved, and of which the history of religion is in a certain sense a subdivision, and not the least important. Wherever we stand upon solid historic ground, and when our sources are sufficiently copious, we observe how one nation joins hands with another,—how the Roman civilisation blossomed forth under the influence of the Etruscan and the Greek, and the Greek under the guidance of the Western Asiatic; how the peoples of Western Asia were the pupils of Babylon and Egypt, while the

Babylonian civilisation also yielded its fruits to Central Asia, probably at a very early period, but certainly after the foundation of the Persian empire; and lastly, how, since the conquests of Alexander, Indian art and letters have felt the influence of the Greek spirit, while conversely the Indian philosophy and religion had no small share in forming the later Greek philosophy, especially the Neo-Platonic and the Neo-Pythagorean. As to what happened before the era of recorded history we cannot speak so positively. But we may venture to assume that what we know of historic times applies generally to the prehistoric also. The more deeply we penetrate into the past, which new discoveries constantly enable us to do, the more clearly do we see that not even the most ancient peoples of whom we have any record were isolated, but that even then each stage of development was associated and connected with others. There are still scholars who refuse to admit that the Babylonian-Assyrian religion contains a number of elements borrowed from that of the Sumerian people, whose ancient home was conquered by the Semites, a people whose civilisation these scholars ignore, and whose existence they even doubt. I am persuaded that they are mistaken. But even if they were right, even if the Semites had been the first to establish their civilisation there, even if the so-called Sumerian language were merely a very peculiar, and indeed incomprehensible, form of writing the Assyrian, even if the Babylon-

ians had invented their own letters and had had no foreign teachers of writing, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that their religion contains many non-Semitic elements, whether these foreign elements be Sumerian or Accadian or otherwise. A most ingenious and learned attempt has lately been made to prove that even the Chinese and the Egyptian civilisation and religion owe their origin to Babylon. This is not impossible, but I can hardly regard it as proved. And although we must proceed very cautiously in this matter, it seems to me by no means improbable that some connection existed between Babylon and Egypt.

One might be inclined to say that the proof of the unity of development implies also the proof of its continuity or unbroken progress. But the two things are not quite the same. There is a connection between the Renaissance and the ancient Greek-Roman civilisation, there is a connection between the Reformation of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin and primitive Christianity. But between the one and the other lie the Middle Ages, which need not be called a night of absolute barbarism to convince us that they were more remote from the civilisation of antiquity and the Pauline Christianity than the Renaissance was from the former or the Reformation from the latter. In history, including that of religion also, there are periods of decline and retrogression, or at least apparent stagnation, which are

supposed to prove that development is not continuous, but is sometimes interrupted, although to resume its course at a later period.

But we must beware of being misled by appearances. The so-called periods of decline, in which religion is thought to be on the brink of ruin, afford the strongest proof that religious development, far from standing still, is ever progressing. What is it that declines? Religion? By no means, but only one or more specific forms of religion. And why? Because they have had their time. Because they no longer satisfy those religious needs which have meanwhile developed under the influence of a more advanced civilisation. No doubt, during such periods of transition, there are many who can no longer rest satisfied with the old forms, and are unable to create new ones or to appreciate or comprehend what is offered to them as such, who despair of religion altogether, and imagine that they have no further need for it. And this is why religion seems to be drawing to an end. But so little is this the case, that just at such periods there arise mighty spirits from whom emanates a new revelation of religious life, a higher than the preceding, yet rooted in it. And what do we then see taking place? Religion, which seems to be losing her hold over society, concentrates herself in small groups of kindred spirits, who usually rally round some distinguished leader that has arisen in their midst. Or she revives in some prophet by the grace of God, inspired

above all others, in whom the whole of the previous religious development culminates, but only through him to be still more highly developed. It seems as if the religious element in mankind, just when apparently about to die out, gathered itself into a focus, in order thence to radiate anew with life-giving glow. The so-called periods of decline may therefore be called glittering pinnacles in the history of religions, years of grace and salvation, classic epochs, graven on men's minds, and cherished in the memory of later reformers to nerve and inspire them for their work and conflict —short but glorious seasons of a renewal of life, of young enthusiasm, of joyful hope.

Again, therefore, it is the power of personality that effects this renewal. But by what sort of persons is it effected? Those who relax the existing forms of religion, often with somewhat ungentle hand, with little discretion, with little compassion for the weak, in order to show that these forms no longer answer the requirements of the more highly developed religious feeling— as well as those who strive to inspire with new life the ancient system in its original form, with its primitive doctrine and classic institutions, with the object of rescuing religion—are living proofs that religion does not stand still, but is ever developing, and in a certain sense they also contribute to its development. But the creative spirits, those from whom the new life emanates, have no such bias. They have absorbed the whole

of the ancient system, they have neither acquired a mere smattering of it nor lightly rejected it, but have pondered it and lived through it; they have grasped whatever is permanent in it by means of the experience of their own pious souls, and instead of destroying they fulfil and exalt it. S'âkyamuni had sought it in the schools of the Brahmans before he appeared as the Buddha to all who were bowed down by the miseries of existence. Luther too had wrestled in his cell in prayer, he had faithfully performed all that the strict monastic rule had imposed upon him, he had visited the holy city in order to satisfy the yearnings of his soul for peace, before he bore witness from his own experience and publicly declared that peace must be sought for in some other way. And you know who it was that said that He had come not to destroy but to fulfil.

An eminent scholar[1] has recently attempted to prove that the development of religion is accomplished solely by the persons he calls ecstatics. And he mentions Seers, Mystics, and the like. But I fear that we are here getting beyond the limits of a healthy mysticism, to which we cannot deny its proper place in religion, and are drifting into morbid and fanatical mystification. Inspired with divine spirit, full of God, walking as if seeing the Unseen, realising the Infinite in this finite existence, such have been the creators of a

[1] Duhm, Das Geheimniss in der Religion.

new religious life. Not beside themselves like a medicine-man or a Shaman, it was they themselves who created it, aware of their object and fully conscious of their vocation. Although there were some among them who could not entirely rise above the imperfect conceptions of their time, and who were sometimes overwhelmed by the thoughts crowding in upon them, there is one at least whose religious life was in perfect harmony with His earthly life, who spoke as one having authority, but with the sublime calm and self-control of a Sage, the Master of all, because He was ever master of Himself.

Let me sum up what I have said. Religion develops through the medium of persons, because it is the most personal attribute of man. It must constantly become man in order to continue to be his possession and to grow up with him. For such creative religious spirits stamp the impress of their genius upon a long period of development; renewed and focussed in them, religious life radiates from them throughout the succeeding ages. This is the great law of *the continuity of religious development.*

LECTURE X.

ESSENTIALS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION.

We now approach the close of our inquiry into the development of religion, and we must to-day sum up its results. One great question still remains to be answered, Wherein does the development of religion essentially consist? This is not the same question as we asked at the outset, as to the nature of development in general, including that of religion also. Development, as we saw, is not a supersession of the old by something new, something different, whether heterogeneous or not, but is growth from a germ, in which lies latent everything that afterwards springs from it; and by the development of religion we do not signify a vague abstraction, but simply the development of men, and therefore of all mankind, as religious. It was necessary to begin with this definition in order that we might know the precise subject of our research. But the above answer does not solve the question as

to the essential elements in the development of religion. The real answer to that question we can only now give as the result of our whole survey.

The problem we have been occupied with seemed to us so complex and intricate as to be incapable of a very brief solution. We required to trace the development of religion, not only in its successive phases or stages, but also in its different directions, to inquire how far it is connected with general development, and to try to discover some of the laws it obeys, or at least to study the facts from which such laws may be deduced. The question now is, What unity is to be found in all these facts? what is the fundamental law on which the various other laws depend? what in its essence is religious development itself? Now that I am prepared to answer the question, I am more than ever conscious of the fact that my answer will be only a well-meant attempt, but one which I hope will bring us a little nearer our goal.

I shall first clear the way by rejecting several answers that have already been given, as they seem to me unsatisfactory.

The progress of religion, it has been said, simply means progress in morality; and the development of religion consists solely in its becoming more ethical. Such an assertion was to be expected from those who almost entirely identify religion with morality, and who regard it merely as a peculiar form of moral

life,—a higher form according to some, but a lower according to others. But this does not satisfy us, who do not deny the close connection between morality and religion, but are convinced that each has its own sphere, and that, though not separate, they must be distinguished from each other. We are referred to the ethical character of the highest religions, as compared with the more naturalistic character of the lower. We have admitted that character by giving the name of ethical to one of the two great categories into which we divided religions according to their stage of development. But you will remember that we only called them so for the sake of brevity, and that we described them as ethico-spiritualistic revelation-religions, from which it is obvious that we do not regard the ethical element as their sole feature. Moreover, I have expressly stated that, while these religions are the highest we know, and the highest existing, we can well imagine a still higher form, which will doubtless present somewhat different characteristics. All the higher religions we know have arisen out of an ethical revival, but we must not confound that which gives the last and most forcible impulse to a reform with the reform itself. All progress, not only in morality, but in knowledge and science, in philosophy and rational perception, in art and sense of beauty, necessarily exerts an influence upon that of religion,

as I have expressly pointed out. But because religion assimilates from the general development whatever conduces to her own development, it is not on that account identical with ethics, any more than with philosophy or art. All these are manifestations of the human spirit, and all respond to certain needs of man's intellect or emotions; but none of them, and not even morality, are capable of supplying the want which religion alone can satisfy.

There is more to be said in favour of the opinion that the essence of the development of religion may be summed up in the formula, "from the sensuous to the spiritual"; and we shall immediately see that it contains a certain amount of truth. But we cannot accept this answer as conclusive. We are not yet pure spirits in this earthly existence, and the sensuous element sways us as much as the spiritual. It is in vain that we try to kill it; and if we ruthlessly suppress it, it will inexorably avenge itself sooner or later. But this is by no means the mission of religion: her task is rather to establish due harmony between nature and spirit. She neither may nor can eradicate the natural, but must hallow it by the spiritual. To what has already been said on this subject I need not now add anything further.

Or if it is supposed that religion must become a mere sentiment or an emotional condition, manifesting itself in actions, and throughout the whole of life,

which it elevates and sanctifies—that we must gradually lay aside all forms, and give up trying to form a conception of the Ineffable and Infinite, or making any attempt by word or deed to place ourselves in relation to it, and that we must therefore take leave of doctrine and ritual alike—I fear that we should then have to take final leave of religion itself. We know very well that no human language is capable of giving perfect expression to the supernatural, the divine, the infinite; that an accurate conception of God is out of the question, and that no idea, however sublime, can be wholly adequate to denote the object of our adoration; that our worship, although offered in spirit and in truth, is but the feeble stammering of children. But we require these forms. And religion too requires them to secure its existence and to save it from entire dissolution. The devout soul requires symbols, images, and figures, even if only expressed in words, in which to embody its religion. For although religion must dwell in the human soul as a spiritual possession, it must reach that soul through the senses, through the medium of eye and ear.

And accordingly, when Professor von Siebeck describes it as one of the signs of religious development "when the spiritual in the non-spiritual comes into the foreground and becomes independent," he expresses a certain amount of truth for which we shall presently

give him full credit; but we cannot accept the antithesis of spiritual and non-spiritual in his description, especially as it is connected with the conception of religion on which he founds his *Religionsphilosophie*—I mean the idea that its essence consists in renunciation of the world (*Weltverneinung*). The whole dualism of spiritual and non-spiritual, of religious and worldly, belongs doubtless to a higher stage of religious development than an earlier and more materialistic stage, but to one which we have at all events outgrown. We can no longer rest satisfied with this dualism, but we strive for harmony and reconciliation. World-consecration must now replace the world-denial in which a former age sought its salvation.

Or does the development of religion chiefly manifest itself in becoming more and more the sole object of life and the supreme ruler of the world? This view has sometimes been expressed, and it has been supposed that religion will only reach full maturity when it obtains sole and undivided possession of man and of human life. But this has nothing to do with its development. All kinds of religions in very different stages of development have aimed at such an exclusive supremacy; they have tried to assert their authority in every sphere, and they have sought to obtain jurisdiction over all rational thought and creative imagination, scientific research, morality, and political and social institutions. And not unfrequently they have

succeeded. But always to the great detriment of mankind, which, thus hampered in the free expansion of its powers, has been miserably crippled, and has no longer dared to aspire to the true, the good, and the beautiful, but has been compelled to conform to certain religious traditions and sacerdotal precepts, and has thus been seriously hindered in the fulfilment of its destiny. And, above all, to the great detriment of religion itself, which has thus made itself hateful instead of attractive, has imposed a yoke on men instead of setting them free; and instead of stimulating them to a constant cultivation of all their divine gifts, has quenched their spirit, clipped their wings, and paralysed their noblest aspirations. If this can be called a growth of religion, it is a wild growth, which must be checked in the interests of religion itself, as otherwise it might prove fatal to it. Religion has its own task in human life, that of consoling, reconciling, sanctifying, and of realising the infinite in the finite: to this task let her remain true; let her rule over her own province, in order thence to exert a blessed influence over everything human. Exclusive supremacy over the domains of others is as prejudicial to the ruler as to the ruled.

Nor is the above view more acceptable when differently formulated, as, for example, thus: "The development of religion consists in the increase of its power of awakening religious emotions." Mr A. J. Balfour, the Chancellor of this University, a rare

example of philosopher and statesman combined, has discussed a similar view with reference to art, in his very important work, 'The Foundations of Belief, being Notes introductory to the Study of Religion' (London, 1895, p. 59 *seq.*) "Even in those periods," he says, "when the movement of art is most striking, it is dangerous to assume that movement implies progress, if by progress be meant increase in the power to excite æsthetic emotion." He then illustrates the danger of such an assumption from the case of music, the development of which since ancient times has been so great in his opinion that it can scarcely be exaggerated. Yet the position and the importance of music as compared with other arts, so far as he can discover, have not been perceptibly altered. Four hundred years before Christ its importance was as great as it is now: it was as great in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries as it is in the nineteenth. Whence he draws the conclusion that "this amazing musical development, produced by the expenditure of so much genius, has added little to the felicity of mankind; unless, indeed, it so happens that in this particular art a steady level of æsthetic sensation can only be maintained by increasing doses of æsthetic stimulant." I am no judge of music. But if the premisses be sound the conclusion is quite correct. The development of music is not recognised by any greater power it exercises over the present than over earlier generations of men. Its

power has remained the same; but in order to retain that power, it has been obliged to keep pace with the general development of mankind.

At all events this holds true of religion, which swayed men's minds, and awakened their religious emotions, just as powerfully twenty or thirty centuries ago as at the present day. There have even been periods in history when it possessed much greater influence than, in its predominating form at least, it now exerts on the hearts of the great majority of civilised men. No devout soul at the present day can more fervently long for communion with God than the Jewish Psalmist, whose soul thirsted for the living God like the hart that panteth for the water-streams. William I. of Prussia, when he placed the imperial crown on his own head, in order to intimate that he received it from the hand of God, could not feel his dependence on God more profoundly than the great Nebuchadrezzar when he bore witness that he owed everything — his sovereignty, his conquests, and his whole life — to Maraduk, the great Lord of Babylon. No pilgrim of the middle ages could enter the Holy Sepulchre with more heartfelt emotion than was experienced by the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hian when, four centuries after Christ, he visited the rock of Rajagṛha, where his Master, the Buddha, had once preached, and which, with tears of affection, he adorned with flowers

and lamps and perfumed with incense.[1] In short, the signs and essentials of the development of religion are not to be sought for in the increase or extension of its sway over men's hearts. If the standard of its influence is not to decline, if it is to continue capable of satisfying higher demands and more complex wants, it must develop proportionately with general progress. This is a law we have already considered. But it does not afford an answer to the question now before us, Wherein does the development of religion essentially consist?

It is therefore time to pass from these critical discussions to a more positive answer.

If we carefully trace the course of religious development we shall at once observe a continual movement from uniformity to ever greater diversity. No doubt the lowest or least developed religions, the naturistic so far as they still exist, and the animistic, are countless,—countless as the families and tribes which still live side by side without having been united into a single great nation. Countless too, at that stage, are the deities or spirits of different names; and even the one revered as the highest, or at least as the mightiest and most dreaded, of the heavenly spirits, is known to each tribe by a different name. Even where we still detect traces of an earlier unity, as among the North American

[1] Foe Koue Ki, xxix.

Indians and the Polynesians, in which case the name of the supreme Spirit is only dialectically varied, while several of his satellites retain the same names, yet each group, after the dispersion of the once united nation, adopts a religion of its own, and carefully distinguishes it from that of the others. We might therefore suppose that the greatest diversity would prevail here, to be succeeded by greater agreement on a subsequent and higher level. Yet this is not the case. While there is endless diversity in names and in details, there is really the utmost uniformity. All these gods and spirits, however differently named, all these rituals, which people are so unwilling to exchange for those of their neighbours, resemble each other. The religions swayed by Animism weary us with their hopeless monotony. Wherever we encounter Animism the same features recur, as regards its foundation and its manifestations alike. Everywhere we find the same theme, slightly varied, yet endlessly repeated. The same customs, utterly absurd and senseless as they seem to the civilised, yet quite logically deduced from the animistic premisses, are met with among widely sundered nations, which cannot be supposed to have derived them by tradition or adoption from a common ancestral home; they are met with in the islands of Polynesia and Melanesia, as well as among the Hottentots of South Africa, and also as a survival among Zarathushtrian Iranians, and even at Rome, where the

Flamen Dialis, the priest of Jupiter O. M. Capitolinus, performed them with the utmost gravity.

The number of religions is further diminished when larger states are formed, uniting a group of tribes into a single nation, and when the religions of these tribes too are fused into a single national or state religion. Yet the diversity still increases. We have seen how the Aryan and Semitic, or, as we preferred to call them, the theanthropic and the theocratic religions, differed from each other. That family character is necessarily rooted in the difference of character between the primitive Aryan and Semitic peoples. But the two peoples gradually disperse, as one section after another quits its original home. New nations are formed, and with these nations new religions, and while all these religions, as we said, retain more or less of their family character, each again develops independently, so that even the most closely related peoples, as the Indians and Persians, the Greeks and Romans, while retaining the names of many of the gods and many customs unaltered, have considerably modified their religion in its special characteristics. And as civilisation advances the differences greatly increase. The nature-religions, not even excluding the semi-ethical, resemble each other much more closely in doctrine or in mythology and in sacrificial observances than the ethical do. There is, for example, more difference between some of the Christian churches and sects, although they all

appeal to the same Bible, than between the mythology of Homer and that of the Veda. The higher the development, we may even say, the greater the diversity. Take, for example, the three world-religions, as we have called them for the sake of brevity—Islâm, still half particularistic, Buddhism, and Christianity. They all sought to gather the whole of mankind into a great unity, yet all have broken up into a number of different parties and divergent tendencies, and the two last named into distinct churches; while Christianity, undoubtedly the most highly developed of the three—Christianity, which began by proclaiming that "One is our Father in heaven, and we are all brethren"—is the most divided of all, having soon been rent asunder into two great rival churches, one of which, the more developed of the two, is again subdivided into numerous different churches and sects. It therefore appears that, where religion shows the greatest vitality, the number and the diversity of its forms and manifestations will also be greatest, that new varieties will constantly arise, and that the course of development is from unity to plurality, its essence being differentiation.

This is undoubtedly the case. But it is only one side of the truth, one portion only of the course traversed by development. Let us examine the other side.

For there is another phenomenon to be noted just as carefully in this connection as the constant rise of new varieties, or progress by differentiation. No less impor-

tant, and parallel with this movement, we can detect another running throughout the whole course of the history of religion—a constant striving after *unity*. I do not mean by this the fusion of religions of different tribes and regions into one official State religion, as, for example, we have seen to be the case in Babylon and Egypt. For this is not a purely religious occurrence. It is the natural result of altered political conditions. It does not arise from the requirements of the devout or from religious reflection, but solely from State interests which demand such a union, although it cannot fail to exert a great influence on the development of religion. It was statecraft, too, that induced the great Cyrus to proclaim himself at Babylon as having been summoned by the chief Babylonian god to emancipate the oppressed nation, and as one of his most faithful worshippers; and it was statecraft that induced Darius Hystaspis to make amends for the fault of Cambyses in Egypt by presenting the priests of Memphis with a new Hapi-bull, and erecting a temple for Amon-Râ of Thebes in the oasis of El-Khargeh, although perhaps these monarchs may have seen some resemblance between these gods and their own Ahura Mazda. But it was not mere political interest which used to bring together at certain seasons a number of the tribes of North American Indians, often deadly enemies, for the celebration of common rites, and the smoking of the pipe of peace at the Red Pipestone quarries; nor was it mere policy which made

the Greeks, in spite of their many differences, flock to religious centres like Olympia and Delphi, in order, as a united people, to adore the Father of gods and men at the former, and his beloved son, the revealer of the divine will, at the latter. Nor, in their origin at least, can we detect a political motive in those religions which admit other nationalities than their own to their communion, nor in those which proceed on the principle of promising to all men the salvation they preach, and thus of embracing all mankind in a single great religious unity.

In order to demonstrate the universality of this proposition I should be obliged to review the whole history of religion. But as the facts I should have to cite are known to every one, a few outlines may suffice. At every turn there arise divisions; and at every turn people regret them and seek to reconcile them. But, as a rule, they are partly actuated by human motives. Ambition, self-interest, spiritual pride, obstinacy, and personal prejudices play their part, but they are by no means the sole motives. Beneath the surface we can always detect differences of disposition and points of view. But it is not every division, not every divergence, rendered necessary by the impossibility of satisfying one's religious needs in common with persons of widely different views and development, that constitutes diversity. The philosophical observer rejoices in the rise of these differences as being new manifestations of the many-sided religious life.

By this wealth of varying forms religion proves its vitality. But people of earnest piety deplore these divisions. Grotius, himself a victim of the fierce religious dissensions of his age, persecuted and exiled, composed a prayer in which he implored God mercifully to heal the schisms of distracted Christendom, and, amid the heat of the strife, fondly dreamed of a union of Calvinists, Lutherans, Remonstrants, and other sects in a single Church. So zealous was he for union that an attempt has even been made to prove his return to the pale of the Roman Church. The Roman Church knows no higher principle. Unity is dearer to her than truth or humanity. She has vindicated it at the cost of rivers of blood; and where a rupture was inevitable she has strained every nerve to regain the lost ground. But has she done so solely to maintain and extend her authority? Certainly not. We should be prejudiced and unjust if we failed to perceive that conviction also underlies her efforts, and that the aim of all religion should be to unite all men as worshippers of the same God and children of one Father. We may admit this, although we refuse to believe that she has yet found the true principle of such a union—a union which cannot rest upon external authority—and although we decline to surrender our most cherished spiritual heritage in favour of her notions of unity. In other directions, too, voices are now raised in favour of reconciling old differences.

Practical men shake their heads at this. Pious wishes, they declare, but never to be fulfilled, because their fulfilment is inconceivable. And they are right—from their point of view. Let us admit that Grotius misunderstood his own times, and that the Roman Church misunderstands the present. But is it a mere dream or a fond illusion, or a beautiful prophecy, that there shall be one fold under one Shepherd? At all events, this is a yearning deeply implanted in the religious heart. Not only weary of strife, but convinced that, in spite of all diversities, which even increase with advancing development, schism ought not to be the normal state of things in religion, people earnestly seek for common ground, for ideas and forms in which they can be at one, and wherever possible they reunite. Even those who consider themselves bound to exclude others from their communion, because dissenting from what they deem divine truth, endeavour to maintain unity in their own way, but not at the cost of truth. Others, averse to compulsion by external authority in matters of faith and conscience, try to effect some kind of compromise. They propose to secure unity by disregarding minor points of difference, and only insisting on agreement in those main points in which they think all might be at one. Experience, however, has shown that such a compromise is only feasible on a small scale and as a temporary measure. Others accordingly seek for other methods of reconciling differences,

whether by forming a league of religious communities united by some general principles, but otherwise independent, or by granting perfect and unrestricted liberty to all, without insisting on any union beyond that of the spirit and of love, which is doubtless the true and only durable union. We need not criticise these different methods here. We merely mention them in order to show that people have laboured to promote unity and reconciliation in every possible way.

The course of religious development thus appears to be this. From an originally somewhat motley and chaotic, yet monotonous, multiplicity of forms, several more developed groups gradually detach themselves, formed by the confluence of a number of hitherto distinct modes of worship. This is the genesis of a certain unification, and the beginning of differentiation at the same time, because new and more pronounced varieties constantly arise. And so the process goes on: union and partition, the formation of great unities which again break up into new varieties, until new combinations are again effected. Yet the general tendency of religious development indicates ever-diminishing particularism, ever-increasing universalism, and an aspiration, whether conscious or not, for true catholicity.

We observed the same tendency when speaking of the different streams of development flowing at first in diametrically opposite directions, yet ultimately unit-

ing. And a similar process takes place throughout the development of doctrine and ritual.

Take the conception of a God, for example. The earliest was not polytheistic, still less monotheistic, or even what has been termed henotheistic, but consisted in a vague, indefinite, glimmering notion of a supernatural or spirit world, to which all the spirits, thousands upon thousands of them, belonged. As soon as certain ideas of a God have been evolved thence, we find in this case also the utmost uniformity coupled with boundless multiplicity. Polytheism in the proper sense arises—and this is a great advance—as soon as the characters of the different gods have become more pronounced, and their names, at first names either of objects or phenomena, or powers of nature, have become firmly established as proper names, the original meaning of which is often forgotten. But then comes reflection, and with it a desire to reduce the multiplicity. This is effected in one of two ways. People either seek for unity in those attributes which their gods possess in common, or they endeavour to exalt one definite god to a rank far above all the others, and afterwards to substitute him for these as the only true god. The Vedic religion, so far as we know, was probably the first to emancipate itself to some extent from polytheism. The conception of one only god is applied in the Veda in turn to each of the principal deities; and the passages which distinctly state that,

when many names of gods are mentioned, one and the same god is truly meant, are too well known to require citation. The same idea is contained in the Latin *numina sunt nomina*, "many gods are but many names." The Greeks show the same intuition in calling all the chief gods of foreign nations Zeus, after their own chief god, whatever be their names in the languages of these nations; while they identify minor foreign deities with their own Apollo, Aphrodite, Artemis, Asklêpius, and, above all, their Hêraklês. Even the Babylonians knew that the names of the gods of their neighbours differed from their own and from one another, but that they were truly the same gods, as has been proved by lists of the names which some of the Babylonian gods bore among other nations. But a different course has sometimes been pursued, and often by the same people. Princes in Assyria and in Egypt tried to get the special god of their choice worshipped as the only true god; Antiochus Epiphanes tried to impose his Zeus, a compound of the Olympian and the Capitoline, upon the Jews; while the Jews themselves, who had advanced from monolatry to monotheism, now pronounced all the gods whose existence and power they had hitherto admitted, though they had declined to worship them, to be idols and vain gods, and proclaimed their own national God to all as the only true deity. The later history of religion testifies to the ever-extending conquests of monothe-

ism. Polytheism constantly strives to regain the ground it has lost, and it fights with the obstinacy of despair. The ancient gods of Irania reappear as servants and satellites of Ahura Mazda and profess the Zarathushtrian doctrine. Or such gods assume the form of Buddhist, or Mohammedan, or Christian saints. But they are no longer gods. Polytheism proper now survives only among a few uncivilised nations, and among the lower classes of some of the more civilised. It has had its time. It belongs to a bygone stage. Victory and future sway are assured to monotheism.

Our limits forbid us to illustrate the above statements by other examples derived from religious doctrine, or to show in detail how the desire for unity is also manifested in the development of ritual, a process likewise attended with constant differentiation. At first simple, rude, unsophisticated, and bound by no fixed rules, forms of worship gradually come to be strictly regulated, more complex, and more abstruse, so that it becomes almost impossible to approach the deity without the aid of experts. Brahmans, Rabbis, priests, and theologians of every grade make subtle distinctions hitherto unthought of, and demand ever greater and more costly sacrifices, ever more exact observance of the most trivial regulations. But opposition is inevitable. The exaggeration which makes ritual degenerate into senseless trifling calls into existence an opposite exaggeration. In India, for example, the

Pûrva-Mîmâṁsâ, with its elaborate *karman* or sacrificial service, is opposed by the Uttara-Mîmâṁsâ, which rejects the *karman* altogether, and seeks salvation in contemplation alone. And in cases also when such extremes have been avoided we may invariably detect the tendency towards simplification and union. In India and Persia the Soma-Haoma sacrifice becomes not only the most important but almost the only one. In Israel, though not without a vehement struggle, the whole cult is concentrated at Jerusalem, in order thus to put an end to all local differences. And the more religion develops, the more exclusively will the ritual be directed to what unites the worshippers, and the less importance will be attached to minor differences, which indeed have often arisen accidentally rather than of set purpose.

Lastly, not only in creeds and in the regulations of worship, but in what I may call the doctrine of religious life, and consequently in religious life itself, there is displayed a tendency to simplification, a desire to reduce multiplicity to the oneness of which it is but the revelation. And the process is a similar one. (1) The chaos of obligations which the pious must rigidly fulfil, and of prohibitions which they must scrupulously obey, all originating in the old naturistic-animistic views of life, though few remember their source and their meaning, is reduced by various orders of priests or prophets in the higher nature-religions to a system, and this

system becomes an established tradition which is handed down to posterity. (2) After the rise of the ethical religions this tradition becomes written law, and therefore assumes a precise and stereotyped form; but the laws, though arranged to some extent, still lack organic cohesion, the purely ethical and the ceremonial being intermingled, and they are destitute of any one dominating root-idea. (3) In the higher ethical religions, although the law is not abrogated, and is sometimes even extended, the doctrines deemed essential are gradually summarised in several leading precepts, until, when we reach the highest stage of religious development known to us, the great all-embracing principle of Love, expressed in two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets, is revealed as the perennial source of true religious life.

Let me now sum up what I have said regarding these two important phenomena. On the one side we observe the march of development attended by ever-multiplying varieties, ever greater wealth of forms, destined indeed to supersede the old, but only with a section of the devout, while the older forms retain their place, for a time at least, alongside of the new. On the other hand, we observe constant simplification. The creed and the doctrine of religious life are reduced to a fixed system, to a few cardinal points, and at last to a single fundamental principle. There is a continual effort to penetrate from and through multiplicity to unity, from

and through the changing and transient to the permanent, and also to give expression to this aspiration.

But this is far from implying that religious development consists in the co-operation of these two tendencies; for both belong properly to its formal side. They both form a direct manifestation and distinct proof of the constant progress of that development. Both represent what I have called the labour of the human spirit to find adequate expression for growing religious needs. They are not the essential thing, but they may indicate where it is situated. They put us in the way of finding it.

But let me first call your attention to another point. The twofold process which we noticed in religious development—ever-increasing differentiation, coupled with efforts for reconciliation and unity—is not observable in that sphere alone. In the wider sphere of the general development of the human mind it is no less conspicuous. Here too at first everything is chaotically intermingled. Among uncivilised and barbarous peoples the rudiments of intellectual, æsthetic, and ethical, of social and religious life, which are all present in embryo, are still barely distinguishable. This state of matters prevails, at the dawn of history, among the earliest representatives of civilisation, such as the Egyptians. It cannot be maintained that everything during that age is still under the control of religion, for it might as well be said that religion,

science, art, and moral and social life are superintended and regulated by the State. Political, social, and religious life are still one and indivisible. The same class performs both civil and ecclesiastical functions, thus taking the lead in society, and it includes all the men of letters and science, all the votaries of philosophy and art. At length, as the individual begins to assert himself, religion, the State, art, scientific investigation, philosophy, and morality in succession come into conflict with the tradition which had indiscriminately linked them together, and strive to throw off its yoke. It would be a most interesting study to trace the different phases of this battle, sometimes waged with great vehemence, and always with varying fortunes. We cannot now examine it in detail, even where pertinent to our present purpose. But the outcome of it is, that each in turn, sooner or later, conquers a province of its own, and in that province attains ever greater independence. And so too religion becomes more substantive and independent, but not in the sense of being indifferent to the influence of advancing civilisation and the development of art, science, morality, and society. We have seen that the reverse is the case. There is always a certain interdependence between all the departments of human life, just as the fortunes and welfare of a self-governing people, or a sovereign State, cannot remain unaffected by those of surrounding nations. But religion

is independent in this sense, that it is not controlled by the other functions of the human mind or the other phases of human life, and is not hampered by limits detrimental to its growth, but appropriates from them, and assimilates, whatever conduces to its development.

For our purpose it is chiefly important to note that, throughout the course of history, Religion becomes more and more independent. She gradually emancipates herself from State supremacy, and begins, by a natural reaction, to endeavour to gain control over the State. At least she continues long to lean upon it, and to invoke the aid of its physical power and legal authority, fearing lest, if left to herself, she may be unable to maintain her position and her dominion over the hearts of believers. At last, however, she feels strong enough to dispense with this external buttress, for which, as a rule, she has paid dearly. Observe, however, that I am speaking of religion in general, not of a particular religion or church, and that I leave the question of State church or free church out of view. The relation of religion towards science and philosophy, art and morality, is somewhat similar. If she at first enlists philosophy in her service in order to aid her in substantiating her doctrine, or art, in order to awaken religious emotions by its creations, or morality, in order to demonstrate her utility in vindicating law and order in society and the State, yet in the more highly developed religious minds the convic-

tion gradually gains ground that the province of religion is a unique province, in which scientific or philosophical arguments hold as little sway and are as needless as in that of art; that there is no need of art either, in order to arouse religious emotions, but that this object may often be effected by the simplest means, and even by the power of a single enthusiastic word; and, lastly, that religion does not derive her value solely from the moral fruits she yields, and that she occupies too exalted a position to act the part of a mere censor in society or a mere policeman in the State. Thus she grows up in independence, and she demands and exercises sovereignty within her own domain, while conceding complete liberty to all other provinces. And for her right to exist, and for the genuineness of her doctrine, she requires no other vindication than the fact that she satisfies an unquenchable longing of the human soul, and that she fills it with a peace which neither science, nor art, nor morality can bestow.

But this ever-growing independence does not prevent that law of the unity of the mind which we have already mentioned from taking effect; and efforts are therefore constantly made to reconcile religion with the interests of science and art, of philosophy and morality, of society and the State. But self-reliance and independence do not exclude the need of healing the disunion in which men cannot permanently live. On the

contrary, it is just when each branch of human activity confines itself to the sphere assigned to it by nature, when each works in accordance with its own method, and develops in conformity with its principles, without attempting to lay down the law for its neighbours, that most of the causes of discord disappear. It is the task of general philosophy, in recognising and determining the special department of each, to bring about that unity of the human spirit which will bind them into a harmonious whole.

The complex phenomenon we are studying, therefore, resolves itself thus. It consists in differentiation or continual detachment from the original chaotic unity, manifesting itself in the formation of ever greater wealth and more pronounced individuality of varieties, and in ever greater independence of the other operations of the human mind; and this is coupled with an earnest striving for the inward—that is, the essential—unity of what is now externally separated. I believe that this solution throws new light on the process of development, including that of religion, and enables us to understand it better. And it advances us a step further. It also enables us to attempt an answer to the great question that still remains, as to the essentials of development.

For the double phenomenon, the peculiar march of development, can, as it seems to me, only be accounted for by the fact that man becomes ever more

clearly conscious of what he is and what he requires as a religious being, and of the nature and demands of the religion within him. I do not deny that this may hold true in other domains than that of religion. I do not profess to have discovered here the specific root-principle of religious development. On the contrary, I am persuaded that all spiritual development is at bottom simply progress in self-consciousness. But it is beyond our province to examine this here. We confine ourselves to our specific task. And when we ask why religious man cannot rest content with existing forms of religion, but ever strives to create new forms; why he tries to make his religion ever more self-contained and independent of all the external authority which so long controlled it, and thus to purge it of all elements which falsely claim to be religious; why he ever does his utmost to heal disunion; why he endeavours, whilst maintaining the independence of his religious life, to reconcile it with the other requirements of his heart and mind,—I believe that this one answer applies to all these questions: Because he grows up in religious self-consciousness.

Herein, therefore, consists the essence of religious development. For this accounts for the fact, that those who require a new and richer form for their religious life can also appreciate what is kindred and genuinely religious in forms with which they them-

selves can no longer rest satisfied. It also accounts for the fact that as their religious life becomes purer, more self-reliant, and thus inwardly more vigorous, so men cease to fear, and have no occasion to fear, what is regarded with suspicion by many as worldly science, art, and morality, and is even stigmatised by some as godless. Their religion is too firmly rooted to be injured by such influences, so firmly as rather to benefit by them, and to adopt from them whatever may promote its own growth. Nor is there the least fear that this deeper penetration into the essence of religion will ultimately lead to a contempt for all forms. For the so-called purely spiritual religion, about which some have raved, is only possible when religion in the proper sense has vanished and resolved itself into fanatical philosophic contemplation. Wherever there is true religion, it is bound to find utterance. But we may hope that men will at length learn to attach no greater value to changing and transient forms than they really possess, these being necessary but always imperfect and inadequate expressions of the infinite within us, and that they will at all events learn to subordinate them to what is permanent and unchanging. We may hope that, with the advance of development, reform, though not always cordially welcomed, will cease to give rise to passionate bitterness and bloody strife, and that it will rather be recognised as an inevitable result of religious evolution:

that men will bear in mind the words of wisdom, that new wine poured into old bottles will make the bottles burst, and will itself be lost, but that new wine must be poured into new bottles in order that both may be preserved.

This concludes my first course of lectures, treating of the morphological part of my subject. Life and health permitting, I hope to deliver the second course next year, treating of its ontological aspects. Following the same method as we have hitherto applied, that of deduction from carefully observed data, we shall then endeavour to form an idea, not merely of the development of, but of the essential and permanent elements in religion, and thus ascend to its true and ultimate source.

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